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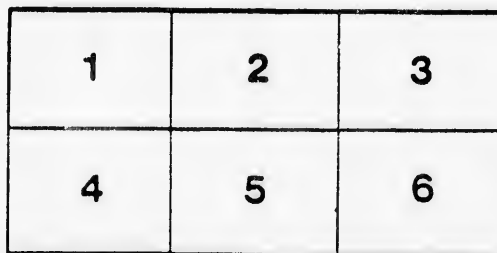
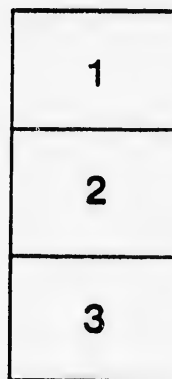
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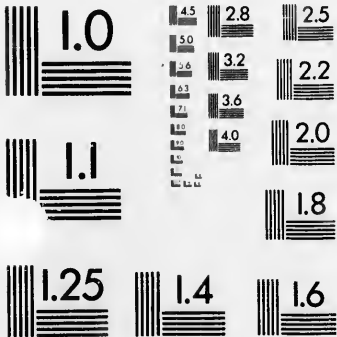
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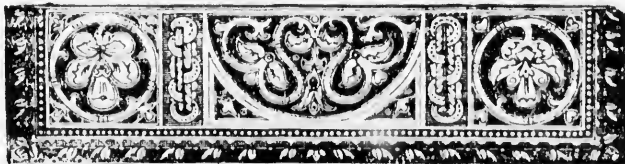
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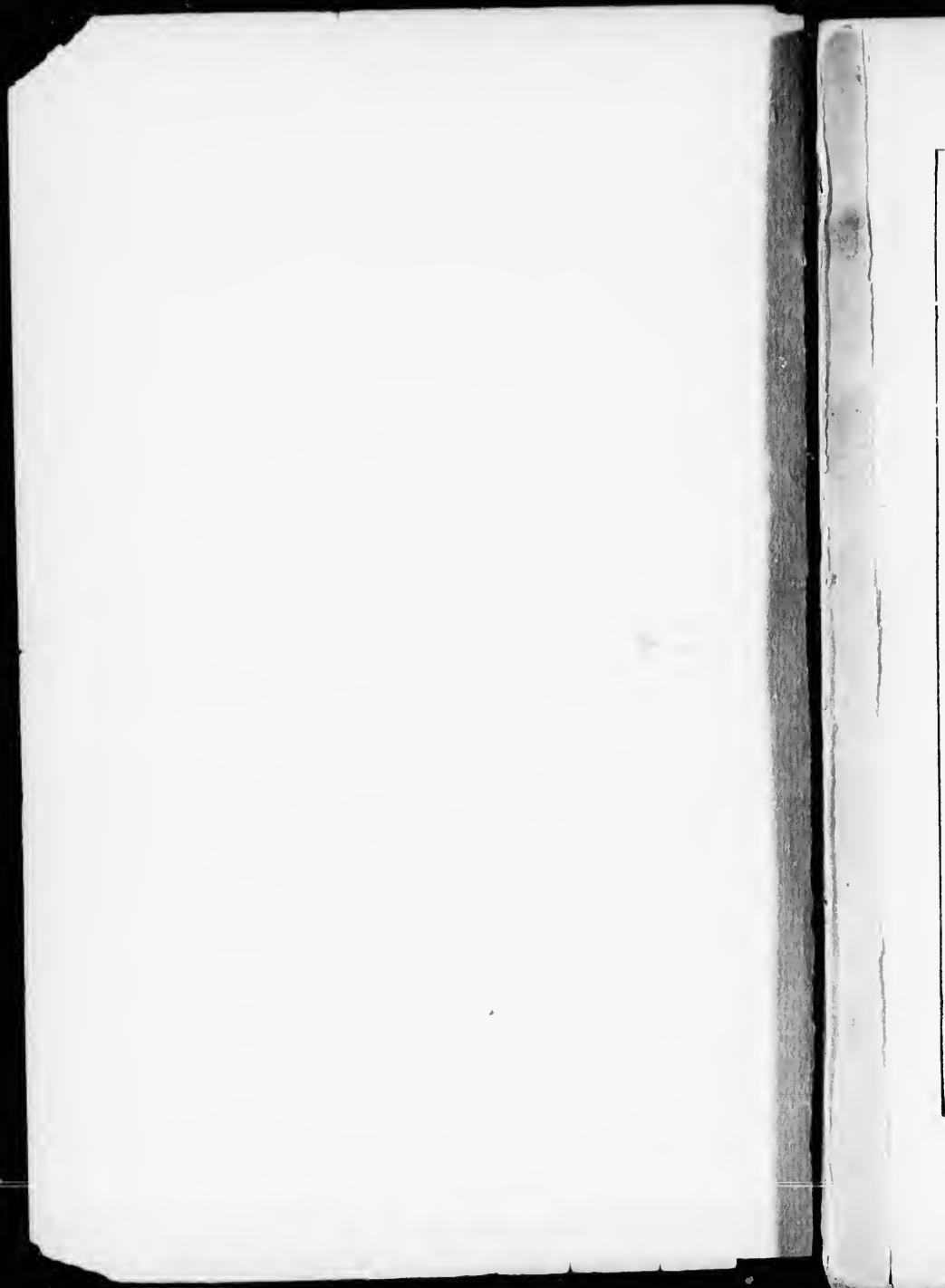
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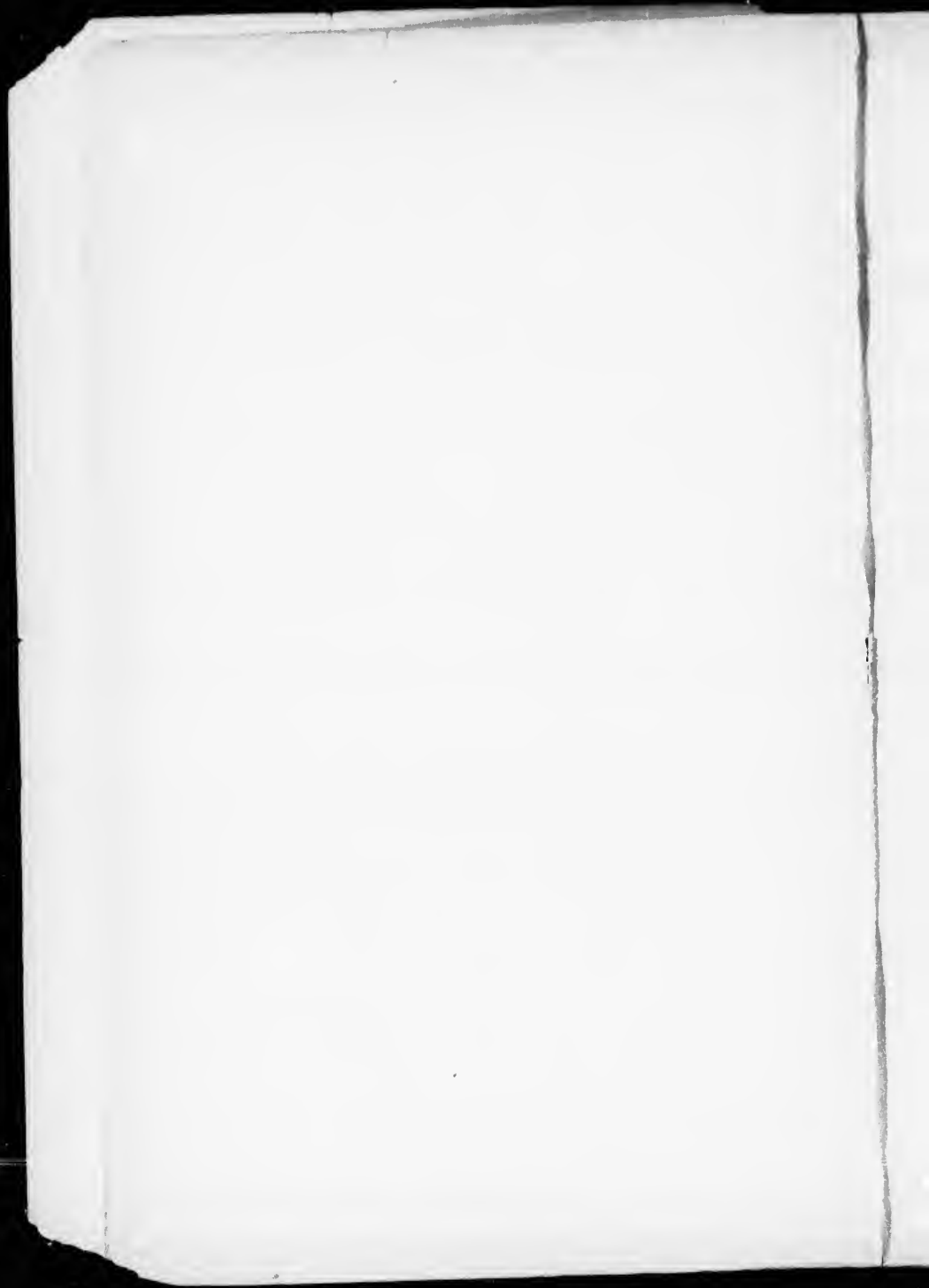
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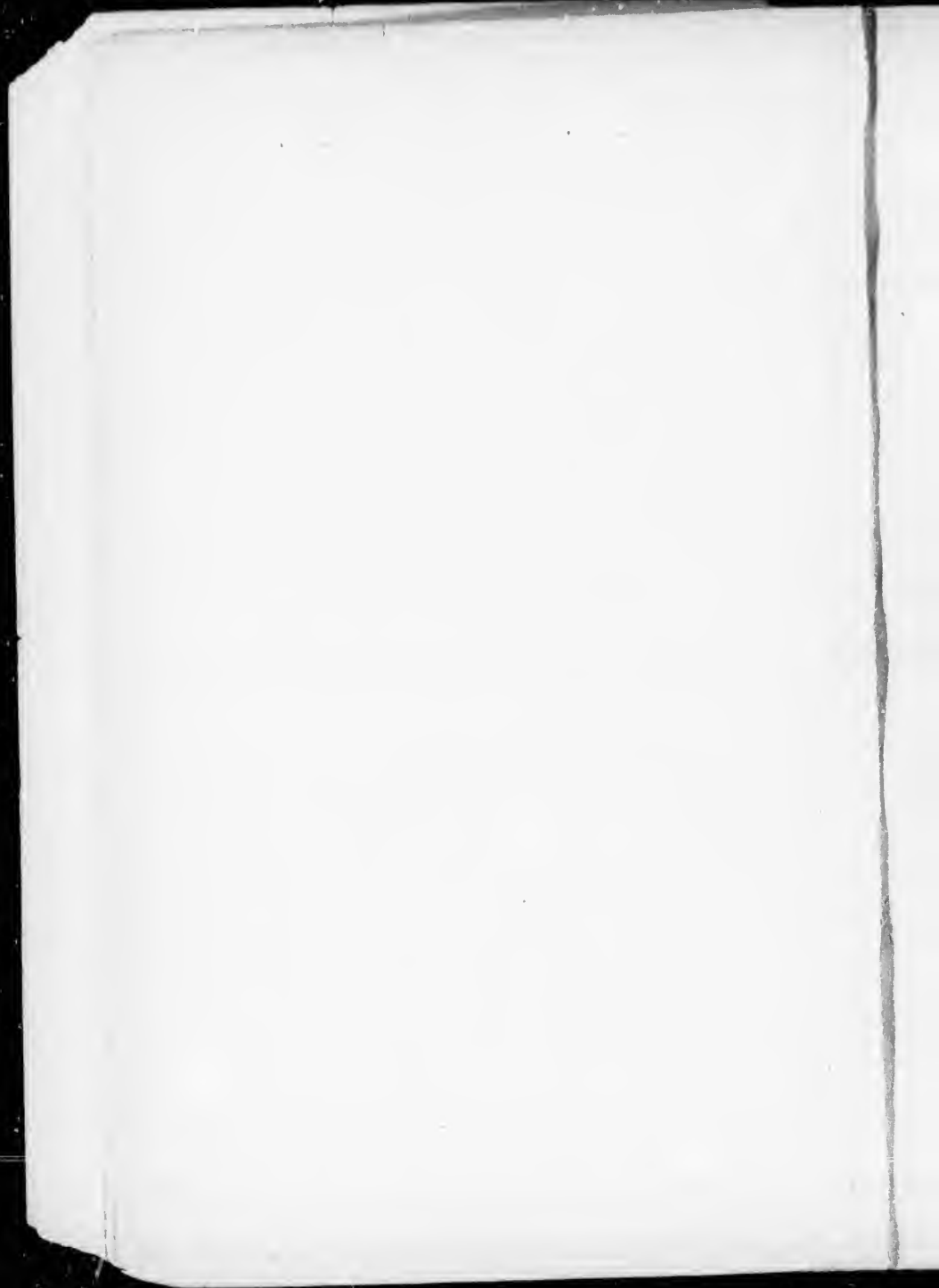
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'There is no Difference.'

Our Condemnation.

YOU are always preaching and writing that the vilest and most unworthy are welcome to come to Christ, but what of those that do not feel so very vile?' a sister in the Lord once said to me. This is a most important question, in regard to a class of people very difficult to reach.

She told me that a friend, after having heard a preacher of the gospel describing the awful state of unsaved people, and giving a solemn exhortation to be saved immediately, said, with great surprise, '*But what is it all about? I feel as happy as a bird.*' She really could not understand that anything the man had been saying had any reference to her.

Such people never did anything very bad. They have been trained up under all the influences of a Christianized society. They never knew vice in its open nakedness. They never felt anything at all very evil in their hearts. They have never been face to face with God, nor taken God's idea of sin. In short, they know not the God revealed in Scripture. I do not mean that they are idolaters or infidels in the popular sense of these words. They

know a god that is a sort of being for pulpit use, a being that is to be addressed as a matter of course and religious duty, at times of particular solemnity. They have a few ideas, derived from various sources, of a being called God, but of the God of Holy Scripture they have no conception. The God who judges sinners they do not know; of God's estimate of sin they have never heard.

But let me be distinctly understood as to this most important matter. Let us imagine a man wandering on the top of some high cliffs. A bright warm sun is overhead, and a soft green carpet of grass is beneath his feet. He feels very happy and gay, but he is going nearer to an awful precipice! He is happy, but he is *blind*. We call, we shout to him to stop. He turns round and says, '*What is it all about? I feel as happy as a bird;*' but onward still he goes. Would it not be love on our part to go and take hold of him, and earnestly tell him that a fearful precipice lies a yard before him?

Dear friend, this is where we see you. I have in my mind at this moment an accomplished young lady, amiable, kind, and dutiful, surrounded by all that can make life happy; one who has her neat Bible or Prayer-book, and who is seen most regularly and religiously in her seat in church or chapel every Lord's-day, who takes great interest in deeds of charity, visits the poor, and is very happy. No one ever dared to say to such an one, 'You are on the broad road that leadeth to destruction.' It would be considered highly improper so to do. Perhaps this silent page may be before your eye.

and now it would say to you, what has been so long unsaid, 'Stop! are you ready to meet God? where shall you spend eternity?' If you were separated this moment from all the dear friends around you, and all those happy scenes, and that comfortable home, and standing before God, what have you to say? I wish to write a little of what He thinks of you. I am not to waste about what your parents, your friends, your pastor, or spiritual adviser think of you. They may think most highly of you, and most justly too, as you may be everything that could be desired from a human point of view. But I wish to place before you what God your Maker thinks of you; yes, of you yourself, whoever you may be: the more refined, cultivated, educated, and wealthy, the more would I be in earnest to get your attention. You may be a princess or an empress, but one word expresses God's estimate of you, and that word is—'SINNER.'

A rich lady one day, when she heard a person speaking of all as sinners, said with great surprise—

'But ladies are not sinners!'

'Then who are?' she was asked.

'Just young men in their foolish days.'

I have not the slightest doubt but that this is a very common idea, though seldom expressed. A lady who had heard some one preaching this kind of truth called on him and said,—

'Do you mean to say that I must be saved just as my footman?'

'Most certainly.'

'Then I shan't be saved.' Poor lady! that was

her business, and this was her fatal decision. My reader, I not only wish to tell you that *you* are a *sinner*—you, educated, amiable lady—but that in God's sight you are just the same as the vilest profligate; just the same as that man you heard about who was hanged for murdering his wife. This is most terrible, but it is true. I remember once saying it to a young man who was not like you, but who knew that he was very bad; and he said—

'I believe all are sinners, but I don't believe that all are the same.'

'Well, we have only one authority to refer to, and it is within your reach; will you take your Bible, and remember one thing, that it is God who speaks. Turn now to Romans, the 3rd chapter and 22d verse, and at the last clause we read, "*For there is no difference*; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This is what God has said.'

'Well,' said my friend, 'I never saw that before.'

'But it was there although you never saw it.'

And now, dear reader, you who are happy and amiable, this is the one thing I wish to tell you from God, '*There is no difference.*' This is what you never could and never can feel: it is a thing for which you must believe God. As it is God with whom you have to do, I beseech you do not listen one moment to any that would take you from His truth. *He says* 'there is no difference,' He has proved that the lawless Gentile or heathen and the lawbreaking Jew or religious person are equally guilty, and that not one among either the outwardly profane or the outwardly decent is found righteous

'THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.'

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or good before Him. Of course there are differences in heinousness or degradation of sins. I need not stop to speak of this; we all know it. I wish to tell you what you and I do not by nature know; namely, that there is no difference as to where we stand before God. The one question is, *guilty or not guilty*. There are no degrees as to the fact of guilt. 'He that offends in *one* point is guilty of all,' and nothing less. He that offends in all points, is guilty of all, and nothing more. Therefore, while there are differences among offences, there is no difference as to guilt. Therefore, all men in the world (and you included), have been brought in guilty before God.

Look at the story of the Prodigal Son in the 15th of Luke. The moment he crossed his father's threshold with his pockets full of money and a respectable dress on, he was as really guilty, as really a sinner, as when he was among the swine in his rags. He was more degraded when keeping swine, but not more guilty. In fact, his degradation and husks were his greatest mercies, for these led him to see his guilt. A full pocket and a respectable appearance are the worst things a guilty sinner can have, as these lead him to think that he is rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, when in God's sight he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I do not ask you, Are you a sinner in the common use of that word? because you for whom I write are not. You mean by sinner, one who is very wild, profane, disobedient, and lawless. This is as men speak of sinners. God,

however, says that there is no difference. The only thing I ask you is this, Have you offended in ONE point—not one point of open sin, but one point in thought or word? You confess to at least one point. God asks no more. If you have offended in one point *you are guilty of all*. Man would never think this nor say it. But God says it. Suppose that your life were like a book that you have written, and there was only one small blot just like a pin's-point in it, whilst all the other leaves were perfectly clean, and you came and presented it before God; He would put it beside all the blackest lives that were ever lived, the blackest histories of the vilest murderers, and thieves, and harlots, and over this collection would be written these words, '*There is no difference.*'

You have offended in one point. It is not a question of being a great sinner—it is this question, 'Are you perfect as the Christ of God, the perfect man?' If you had lived for fifty years without committing one sin, or having one wrong wish or thought, and just then you had an evil thought, and afterwards lived another fifty years and died, aged one hundred, with only this one evil thought (not even a word or an action), when you came to stand before God in judgment, He would put you beside all the offscourings of the earth, men who for a hundred years never had a good thought, and He would say, '*There is no difference.*'

Of course you think this is very hard, but it is true. God will never ask your opinion whether it ought to be so or not. He has in grace told

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us already what He will do. You and I not knowing absolute holiness, cannot understand or appreciate such a judgment. We could never feel that every one is the same in God's sight as regards guilt. But God says it, and there the matter ends. If you wish to go on, risking your chance of escaping hell on the possibility that God has told lies, and that these words are not perhaps quite true, that ‘*there is no difference*,’ then the judgment-day will declare it to you. I would rather advise you to believe God, against your own ideas and opinions, and simply because He has said it, to proceed as if in His sight ‘*there is no difference*’ between those we call great and little sinners.

‘I cannot believe that all are so bad,’ said one, after I had been saying ‘*there is no difference*.’

‘But,’ I added, ‘the Bible says, ‘*there is no difference*.’

‘But there must be greater sinners than others.’

‘Oh, yes. Most certainly. Great offenders are recognised in the Bible; he that owed fifty and he that owed five hundred pence; but as to guilt, God says, “*there is no difference*.”’

‘Well, I cannot see it,’ still continued my friend.

‘But it is in God's Word, whether you see it or not;’ and it is sufficient that God has said it, for His Word is truth. Let me give an illustration. Let us suppose that a bill had been stuck up in this town, saying that recruits were wanted for Her Majesty's Life Guards, and that none would be enlisted but those who were tall and measured not under six feet in height. Let us suppose that many of the young men in

the town were anxious to serve in this regiment, and John meets James, and says to him, 'Well, I've more chance than you, for I am taller than you;' and they put back to back and measure themselves with one another, and indeed John is taller than James. And there continues to be much measuring in the town before the day that the recruiting-sergeant comes.

They measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, but they forget one thing—that not only tall men, but men not under six feet are wanted. One man at last says, 'Well, I've measured myself with every man in the town, and I'm the tallest man in it,' and it might be quite true. But will even he be found qualified?

The trial day comes. Each is measured, from the man five feet six inches, to the very tallest. Suppose he is five feet eleven inches and three-quarters. The sergeant cannot let him pass. He is short. He must take his place among the very shortest as to getting into the Life Guards. He is the tallest man in the town, but he is short of the standard, and 'there is no difference' from the very shortest as to his exclusion from the Life Guards. 'There is a difference' in height, but not in qualification.

Thus it is with every sinner. He may be good, or bad, in the sight of men, but 'there is no difference, for all have sinned and come *short* of the glory of God.' If any man could say, I have come up to God's standard, and this is true, then there would be a difference; but '*come short*' is written on every man's brow, therefore *there is no difference*.

Whether was Adam or Eve the more to blame? This might afford material for a long discussion, and, at the end, the heinousness of their crime would be to us a matter of opinion. I have no doubt there might be some shade of degree as to heinousness; but one thing is sure—if their offences were not equally heinous, they were equally driven out. The cherubim that turned every way with the flaming sword, separated both equally from the tree of life; there was *no difference*.

When the rain began to fall and the waters to rise, after Noah had entered the ark, the people who had their houses high up might have been pitying the poor people who built low down in the valley, as they heard the screams of the drowning. By and by the water sweeps above the little hills, and then those on the high hills, in turn, congratulate themselves upon their high-built villas. But the water still rises; it enters their ground-floors; they rush out of their grand mansions or hovels—for there was *no difference*—and flee to the tops of the very highest mountains; but only find respite for a few moments, for 'all the high hills, under the whole heaven, were covered; fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered, and *all* flesh died that moved upon the earth . . . and *every* man; *all* in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of *all* that was in the dry land, died, and *every* living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground.' Under that judgment-flood there was *no difference*. Look across the wide level sea, and consider the thousands of caves and

stupendous mountain chains that it hides, the plains and valleys, the dens of seaweed and the fortresses of rock ; and the level sea rolls equally over all, and there is *no difference*. Drunkard and respectable lady, the hoary-haired sinner and the infant at the mother's breast—all were under that fearful flood, for there was *no difference*. If you had been there, do you think you would have been made an exception of? You may be able just now to get anything that money can buy. Could money have saved you then? Prince and beggar, strong men and weak, bad and good, were all equally swept away. There was *no difference*. It has happened already, you see, and it will happen again—not with water, but with fire.

'When Jehovah rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven,' there was *no difference*. All were equally destroyed ; very bad and very good shared the same fate. This fearful, unprecedented shower falling out of heaven—brimstone and fire—took every one by surprise, and destroyed every dweller there. 'He overthrew those cities and *all* the plain, and *all* the inhabitants of the cities.' There was *no difference*.

When Israel was sheltered in the house of bondage from the destroying angel's hand, 'it came to pass that at midnight Jehovah smote *all* the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon.' Judge and prisoner alike found themselves face to face with death. In the palace and in the hovel the voice of mourning was heard ; not one of all the doomed

first-born escaped. These first-born might have been beautiful, amiable, educated, and accomplished, or they might have been vile, degraded, ignorant, and hardened; but there was *no difference*. It is with this God you and I have to do.

When Jericho's walls fell flat before the appointment, the ordinance of God, in righteous judgment 'they (the Israelites) utterly destroyed *all* that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old.' The strong man and the feeble woman, the active young man and the decrepid old, were equally slain by the edge of the sword. *There was no difference.*

The flaming sword of the cherubim, the flood of waters, the deluge of fire, the angel of death, and Joshua's sword, all preach to you and me with calm, decided voice, 'There is *no difference*.' These things were written for us, that we might know what we may expect so that we might not leap in the dark. Nothing will happen which has not been told us.

A brother in the Lord could never get a young lady to think about eternity until he quoted this text, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that *forget* God.' That word '*forget*' seemed to haunt her. May it haunt you, dear reader! You do not require to deny God's existence, to mock at Him, to despise Him, to reject Him, to neglect Him; all you have to do is to *forget* God. Do you know the God who says, '*There is no difference?*' Have you forgotten that he identifies you with all descended from Adam? Have you forgotten the God driving our parents out of Eden, and placing a sword crying for blood? Our brother Cain soon forgot, our brother

Abel remembered. Have you forgotten the God who swept away all in the days of Noah?

Have you forgotten that He is the Judge of quick and dead, and as there was *no difference*, so there is a day coming when there will be *no difference*. In the judgment of the quick, *all the goats* are equally on the left hand—'*there is no difference.*' In the judgment of the dead, 'the dead, *small and great*, stand before God'—*small and great* sinners, young and old, king and serf, peer and peasant—'and *whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,' for '*there is no difference.*' Your name may have been written on the communion-roll of any or all the churches, or it may have been written in the sheets of the Newgate conviction-book for murderers, but '*there is no difference.*' The lake of fire levels all distinctions. There may be, there are, many and few stripes; there may be, there are, great and small cups full of wrath, but every cup, be it great or small, is *full*. The lake of fire—fearful thought—rolls its hideous sea of wrath and torment in one surging wave over all that have not been enrolled in the one book of life. In hell, and perhaps only there, for the first time, you will believe that '*there is no difference.*' Every one believes it there.

Let me ask you to look at another picture. Three men are hung on three crosses. If you look at them, you will see that '*there is no difference.*' If you listen to what they are saying, you will hear one at the one side mocking Him in the centre; and the one on the other side saying, 'Dost not thou

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fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed *justly*, but this man hath done *nothing amiss*.' The one in the centre is saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Those suffering 'justly,' and He that did 'nothing amiss,' equally suffer, for 'there is *no difference*.' Those needing forgiveness, and He praying for their forgiveness, are under the same doom, for 'there is *no difference*.' Who are they? Those on either hand are two malefactors, or thieves, who die by the condemnation of their law. He in the centre was proved innocent, and He is the Judge of quick and dead. He has taken of his own free-will the load of sin upon Him, and, under sin, He cannot be cleared. Spotless, pure, holy though He was, He cannot escape. God can by no means clear the guilty. 'He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin.' He is under our guilt, and 'there is *no difference*' between Him and the thief—He must suffer. Dear reader, does not this explain all difficulty about an innocent, amiable, virtuous, accomplished lady being on the same level before God as a drunkard and a murderer? Here is God's perfect Son—yea, the very God-man—on the same level with malefactors, not for Himself, but for us. God became man, and gave Himself for our sins. This satisfaction that the innocent made for the guilty is offered to you, and you may freely have it, for 'there is *no difference*.'

If the eye of the vilest sinner in this world should perchance rest on this—an outcast from all society, one who has lost all friends and all self-respect, the tottering drunkard coming out of his

delirium tremens—I tell you as from God, this Christ is offered to you as God's love-gift. You may reckon Him yours, and proceed upon it as if He were yours as truly as I or any other person in this world do so. You have as much right to claim Him as we, for '*there is no difference*' in God's sight—

‘His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me.’

Thus, my friend, for whom especially I write this, you have to take the lost sinner's place, for God says, '*there is no difference.*' As I have said before, I could know this only from God's Word. You have been as happy as a bird all your life, but you forget to find out what God thinks about you. I have tried to show you this from the Bible. I do not ask you if you feel it, for I am sure you never could, neither could any one feel all the catalogue of sins in Romans i. and iii. true against him individually; but God knows us better than we know ourselves, and this is His estimate of us.

From the same word, and therefore on the same authority, and on none other, I tell you that God has given you Christ. 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.' I do not say that you are to feel that Christ is yours, any more than I asked you to feel all the indictment true against you. You are to believe that Christ is yours, as you believe the black accusation against you is yours, only on the authority of God.

I once asked a woman, 'Do you feel that you are condemned?'

from God, this gift. You may see it as if He were a person in this world, and to claim Him as God's sight—

lean,

especially I write in my own place, for as I have said in God's Word. All your life, but I know about you. I know the Bible. I do not know you never could. I know the catalogue of sins individually; but I know ourselves, and

more on the same I tell you that God is so loved the Father and Son.' I do not know Christ is yours, any indictment true that Christ is yours, and on against you is laid.

I feel that you are

'Yes,' she said.

'Now,' I answered, 'that is absurd. You may know and *feel* you are guilty, but you can only *believe* you are condemned, because you know you are condemned on the authority of the judge who has pronounced the sentence.'

So on God's authority, and on it alone, I know I am 'condemned already.' And on the same authority alone I know that 'Christ is for ME,' me individually. Just because I accept God's estimate of myself, I have a right to accept God's estimate of His Son for me. I believe the record that God gave of His Son to lost sinners. It looks very humble to say I am too great a sinner, or something similar, thus comparing myself with other sinners; but the *humbling* bit is that '*there is no difference.*'

All are 'condemned already,' but only those who believe it reap the advantage of this. Advantage! What advantage can there be in knowing I am condemned already? Much, because only they who believe themselves condemned can claim a Saviour. And now the 'righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto *all*,' that is to say, it is offered, in the person of Christ, equally unto every person in this world, but is only 'upon *all them that believe*; for there is no difference, for all have sinned.' 'All,' in Rom. iii. 9, are said to be '*under sin*' So in ver. 22, all believing ones are under righteousness. It is '*upon all them that believe.*' Righteousness is altogether and for ever outside of every man's attainment, for it must be perfect, and all have

sinned. Read Rom. iii. 19 to 26. 'Where sin abounded grace did much more abound.' God has proved us all equally by nature and practice 'under sin;' He now has placed all of us who believe 'under grace.'

Thanks be unto God, my dear friend, though you began this paper not knowing yourself as God knows you, you may now, on God's authority, where you are, without moving, claim Christ 'the righteousness of God' as yours, and may rise to tell others like yourself what God thinks of us and what God has provided for us. It is in love that He will not let you alone. If we are to be 'before Him' for ever, we must be 'holy and without blame in love;' and if so, it is only 'in His Son' that this can be.

Virtuous or vile, decent or indecent, rich or poor, receive and rest upon God's Christ *now* as He is so freely offered you, and then you may believe (not feel) that your sins are in the depths of the sea, that the shoreless ocean of the love of God flowing through a crucified Saviour has rolled over your millions of sins, and you can triumphantly say, as you look at that ocean covering all that is against you, 'there is no difference.'

If any one is to be kept out of heaven for the believer's sins, that must be Christ, as 'He bore our sins.' God laid on Him our iniquities.

Clad in the skins of God's own making (type of the righteousness of God), Adam and Eve were equally clothed, there was *no difference*.

Shut in by God's hand into the ark of gopher wood, 'Noah only remained alive, and they that

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were with him in the ark,' but they all, great and small, man and beast, bird and creeping thing, lion and worm were equally saved floating nearer and nearer heaven the higher the judgment waters rolled, for there was *no difference*.

Under shelter of the sprinkled blood every house of Israel was safe even in Egypt, and all equally rejoiced around the roasted lamb, for there was *no difference*.

Under protection of the scarlet line all found in Rahab's house were equally safe when all in Jericho were destroyed, for there was *no difference*.

None of all those enrolled in the Lamb's book of life can be cast into the lake of fire. They shall never see the second death, for in that book there is *no difference*; once there, perfectly safe for ever. God's salvation to lost sinners must always be through judgment. We must accept His ordinance. What was there in skins of beasts, an ark of gopher wood, a few drops of blood, a red cord, or in a certain book? They are God's ordinance, God's perfect way. It will matter little what we think will condemn or save, let us accept God's thoughts for both. God has written out our character. Read Rom. i. 29, 'Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.' Gal. v. 19. 'adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

idolatry, witchcraft. Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.'

But I hear some one say,

'That is the character of a heathen.'

'Yea, friend, it is thine—these are what thy heart is made of. They may be kept under, but they are all there in germ, though not necessarily developed into transgression.'

'Nay, all these are not in my heart.'

'Well, I'm sorry to hear it.'

'Why?'

'Because only this character will be received at Calvary. Only what God has written about us will be accepted by Him: but coming to Calvary with this in our hands, we shall hear His voice saying, "I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," and all are gone for ever.'

Why does not every one believe that his heart is desperately wicked? Because it is deceitful above all things, and cannot bear to hear the truth when spoken about itself.

Accept the character God has given to you, and accept the Saviour He has provided for you.

Thou just and holy God,
Before Thee who can stand?
Guilty, condemned, all waiting wrath
In judgment from Thy hand.

One sin deserves a hell,
A death that ne'er shall die;

**Our sins like sands on ocean's shores
In millions 'gainst us lie.**

**Thou God of truth and grace,
We praise Thee for Thy way
By which the guilty may draw near—
Their guilt all put away.**

**Thy Christ who bled and died,
Up to Thy Throne has gone,
Himself Thy love-gift we accept
We rest on Him alone.**

**We praise Thee as Thy sons
Before our Father's face,
As o'er our every sin now rolls
The ocean of Thy grace.**



Would You Like to be Saved?

Our Justification.

WOULD you like to be saved?

'Indeed I would.'

'And would you like to be saved in God's way?'

'Oh! yes. But I can scarcely see how any poor sinner like me can *know* that here.'

'Well, I wish to place before you a sure road to heaven for the unholyest of us all, and shew you how, by simply believing God, we may know that we are saved.'

'I read my Bible, and I am sure I believe every word in it.'

'I know there are few who doubt there is a God, or the leading doctrines of the Bible. But, by the help of the Spirit of God, I would try to tell you some plain truths which you may not know, or things about which you may have wrong notions—truths about God's relation to you, yourself, personally and individually, and about your seeing, receiving, and taking for yourself God's salvation.'

'Do you know that God loves you?'

'Ah! yes,' you say, 'He loves us all.'

'Quite true.' But sit down and ask yourself again, 'Do I believe that God loves **ME!**' To

Saved?

convince you of it, He says in His Bible, and one word is enough from Him—'God so loved *the world*,' and you are part of that world.

But now you say, 'If God so loves me, He will be merciful to me a poor, struggling, failing sinner, if I do the best I can, and He will overlook my many sins.' Now, this is a point upon which you need to be set right. His name is LOVE; but He is as just as He is merciful, as true as He is gracious, and thus 'can by no means clear the guilty.' He can overlook nothing. You know that Jesus Christ, God Himself manifest in the flesh, came into our position, our place, under our sin, and died a great many years ago. He had no sin of His own, but put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now, God says that He so loved us that he gave us Jesus, and all that we have to do is to believe in Him. Of course you believe that He came and died; but did you ever believe that God gave *Him to you*? 'Ah!' you say, 'I wish I could *feel* that.' But God does not ask you to feel it. He states what He has given to you, and asks you to believe Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," whether you believe it or not. When you accept God's gift you believe in Him.

Jesus Himself told us this when on earth; and surely He did not mean to deceive us. He was speaking about the bitten Israelites in the wilderness. They were all bitten, and a serpent of brass was put upon a pole, and every one that looked lived. This serpent was given to the Israelites whether they looked or not. Supposing that one Israelite had said,

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I wish I could feel that the serpent is for me, what would you have said? 'Certainly: are you bitten?' That is all you need. Are you a guilty sinner? then you have a right to believe that Jesus is yours. This is the simplicity of the Gospel, which has stumbled many great men, and which seems so foolish to the wise of this world.

People, when they are ill, or begin to think they are to die, try to pray, leave off bad habits, and be good, and do the best they can. Yet, though all these are very proper things to do, they will never save anybody. Supposing these bitten Israelites, instead of looking, had begun to put on poultices, and get ointments, and dressings, and mixtures, to counteract the bites—well, that would have been very sensible, men would say; but God said, Look; do as I tell you:—Look to that serpent on the pole. So God's gospel is, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

But you may say, 'I am no worse than my neighbours. If I am lost many will run a bad chance; there are many worse than I am, and I only hope in God's mercy.' Now, this is all a delusion. One sin will damn any man for ever. Sin brought God's Son from heaven to become man and die. It is true many are worse than you, and that they will have a bad chance. That is the very reason I write this for you and for all, because most people are going to hell just now and do not know it. I did not make the calculation. Jesus Christ, who cannot tell a lie, said that there were two roads, a wide and a narrow, that most people go in the wide

one, and few go in the narrow one, that the wide one ended in endless misery, and the narrow one in endless happiness. You have only one chance, which is to believe God who says that one sin will send you to hell. You have committed at least one sin. Now accept Christ as your own and only Saviour.

But the great deceiver of the world, that is the devil, who tries to do all he can against God's truth, if he finds that you will not believe yourself to be worse than other people, or that still you have a chance, will take another and an opposite course, for the devil's statements are like the time of a bad watch, either too fast or too slow. He tells you that either you are too bad or not bad enough. Now Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. A man who said of himself that he was the chief of sinners is in heaven long ago. The blackest, vilest, most debased, most debauched, polluted, filthy, unclean, hard-hearted, evil-tempered, lying, covetous, thieving, murderous, grey-haired sinner that ever tottered on this side of the grave, is reached by Him who hung between two thieves for sin. God says it: that is all. We cannot understand it. Only this, He chose to do it, and now He tells us. His voice, dear sinner, is still deeper than you, 'Come unto me.' A thief that had reviled Christ after the hand of death was on him is in Paradise, we know. Why not you? And why not be saved now? If not now it may be never.

I once met a poor woman in the south of England. I began to speak to her about heaven and Jesus. She did not understand me. I asked her if she had

ever heard of Jesus; she said, **no** (most lamentable in this Christian land, so called). I told her that up above those skies Jesus dwelt, and He had so loved us that He had descended from heaven and had become a man. There was a condemned criminal lying waiting execution not far from where we were, and everyone was speaking about him. I said to her, 'You have heard about the man that is to be hanged.'

'Ah yes.'

'Suppose, as he lay in the jail, a knock the night before the execution was heard at the door, and a gentleman walked in, sat down, and said,—

"You have broken the laws."

"Yes, yes," the convict would cry.

"You have been condemned."

"Yes, yes, justly too."

"You are to be hanged."

"Yes, to-morrow."

"I am the Queen's son; I have come from Windsor at Her Majesty's desire, and this is what I am to do: I will take that prison-dress which you have on and sit in your place, and you will take my dress and sit in my place." The convict in astonishment exchanges dresses; he wonders if he is dreaming; the Prince sits down in the convict-dress, and the morning comes; the executioner walks in; he passes the convict; he takes the Prince dressed in the condemned man's dress; he leads him out; he is hanged by the neck till dead; and the man that was condemned walks out free through the opened prison doors." The poor woman looked in astonishment at this picture

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of what Christ had done for the sinner—defective in many points, still it impressed on her the great truth of putting the good and innocent one in place of the bad and guilty man.

'Now,' I said, 'this is what the God that created you and me tells us of His Son in this book. Can you read?'

'No,' she said.

'You will believe what I read from God's Word, this book, the Bible, that God has written for us. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) "When we were yet without strength Christ died for the ungodly." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 6-8.) She gazed in wonder—she knew she was a sinner. 'Will you believe God,' I continued, 'that He loved you and gave you His Son, the glorious Prince of princes, who once died but is now alive again.' She looked amazed, and trembling said,

'May I?'

'Not only have I authority to tell you that you may, but God has commanded you to do it, and you will never please God half so much, although you toiled, and wept, and prayed for a million years, as by obeying His voice and taking His gift.'

This is the substance of our conversation, though by the lapse of time I may have forgotten some things and put in others. It seemed to be used by God; for the woman professed at once to believe on Jesus, and to believe God that in Him she had everlasting life. I saw her next evening, and she had a calm joy in her soul; she was longing to hear

about that glorious Prince who had been sent to die the convict's death, to preach 'liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to the bound.' She resolved to begin to learn to read, so that she might know the truth for herself from the Word of God.

But you may say, 'I am not so bad as she. I can read. I know all about Jesus. *I have always believed.*' Yes, you have always believed about Jesus, but have you believed that *He is yours*? You have always believed that He is the Saviour of sinners; but have you believed that *He is yours*? If you have not, you are still condemned, still unsaved, and, in all affection, I would earnestly entreat you, before you read another line, to lay down this book, and take God at His word, never heeding what you feel, nor whatsoever your heart may say (it is a liar); but believe God that He so loved you (put in your name), that He gave Jesus to you (put in your name—that is faith). You see you have not believed always that Jesus is yours, as I have said, but would repeat again, you have not to *feel* He is yours, but *believe* God that He is yours. If you thus believe Him, then all your sin is for ever gone, as between you and God you are justified from all things, your sins are cast into the depths of the sea, you can never come into condemnation, you are as sure of heaven as if you were there, for God has said it. Certainly your wicked heart within you is not gone. I have often met with poor distressed souls who were unable to make out how people could know they were saved, thinking that if they were

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saved they should never have any sin in them. God says, if people (that is *saved* people) say they have no sin they deceive themselves. All the difference lies in this, having sin **IN** me, and sin **ON** me. I once tried to put the way to be saved before a little girl who was wishing to know about it, and I think it shewed her the gospel to the saving of her soul.

'How many people were crucified on Calvary?'

'Three,' she replied. 'Two thieves, and Jesus between.'

'Were both the thieves equally bad?'

'Yes, they suffered justly.'

'Did both die alike?'

'No.'

'What made the difference?'

'One believed on Jesus, the other did not.'

'Now what about sin with regard to these three? The one thief that did not look to Jesus, had he sin **IN** him?'

'Yes.'

'Had he sin **ON** him?'

'Yes.'

'And Jesus, had He sin **IN** Him?'

She thought a little, but she answered **rightly**, 'No.' (He was holy, harmless, no speck ever defiled Him, He could touch lepers and still be clean).

'Had He sin **ON** Him?'

'Yes.'

'His own?'

'No.'

'The thief that looked to Jesus, had he sin **IN** him after he looked?'

‘Yes.’

‘Had he sin ON him?’

‘No.’

This Cross still divides the world. We are all sinners, as were both the thieves. On one side are saved sinners on the other unsaved sinners. On the one side are those who believe God that Jesus is theirs; on the other, those who do not. On the one side are those who have sin IN them, but no sin ON them, because they have left it on the spotless Sin-bearer; on the other, those who have sin both IN them and ON them. And all the people in the world die as those two thieves did. None ever died, or ever will die, without sin IN them. The name of every man when he dies will be *sinner*. The name of each man was *thief* to the very last breath; but one died a saved *thief*, the other died an unsaved *thief*. The one set of men die saved sinners, the other unsaved sinners. The one die with sin ON them, sinking them down to an awful hell; the other die with no sin ON them, and are ‘for ever with the Lord.’

‘Now, will you not be saved?’

‘How *can* I?’

‘Simply LOOK.’

‘But I have often tried to look, and I have often tried to bring before my mind a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross for me.’

‘Now, this is not the way at all: a vision of Christ on the cross, or a dream, or a thought, is not what God gives. Suppose I was laid on my death-bed to-night, and, as I lay, the devil came to

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me, and told me that I was not saved; suppose I said to him, "Some time ago I had a vision of Christ hanging on the cross for me."

"Ah!" he would say, "that was a delusion I brought before your eyes to deceive you."

"Well, but I dreamt one night that Jesus came close to me, and said, 'Thou art mine.'"

"It was all a delusion."

"I had a thought one day: it just flashed across me all at once, that I was saved."

"Only a delusion." And I could not answer the accusing deceiver. But I will tell you what will put him to flight. I take my Bible and I say, "God *says* that He gave me Jesus."

"How do you know that Jesus is for you?"

"Because God *says* that He so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son."

"But do you think that so great a sinner as you can be saved by simply believing Jesus is yours?"

"Yes; for God *says*, 'He that believeth on the Son *HATH* everlasting life.'" And the devil could say nothing; for it is written, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the *word* of their testimony." You see I would never dare to bring before him what I felt or what ideas had crossed my mind, but simply and solely *what* God *says*. This is *looking*—this is seeing Jesus in the *Word of God*.'

'Will you not be *WASHED* in His *blood*, and be made for ever clean?'

'But how can I? What do you mean by His blood? I have often heard about it, and have often

tried, while lying on my bed, to bring before my eyes the sight of His blood flowing from His wounded hands and feet, and from His pierced side.'

'Now this is another mistake: blood is a figure for *life taken*. Seeing the blood means believing God about the death of His Son, instead of your death. Being satisfied with Christ's death in the room of yours, this is being washed in the blood. You see no real blood, nor vision, nor picture of blood; but in that blessed Book of God you read, "He was wounded for our (faith says *my*) transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. This is seeing the blood.'

'Will you not come to Jesus?'

'But how can I? I have read in the Bible that He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and I have often wished I had been on earth when He was here; I wish I had seen him pass my door, I would have watched Him, and have run to Him and touched His garment. But He is in heaven and how can I come to Him?'

'Now God has most beautifully explained this; for we have not to go up to heaven (Rom. x. 6) to bring Him down, nor to go to the grave to bring Him up; but He is risen and gone to heaven, and He has left His WORD, in which alone He can now be found. This Word maybe in your hands and in your memory, that Word which the Holy Ghost has written, and is now urging you to believe, that God so loved you as to give you Jesus. He is asking you in that

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Word to believe that He is yours. This is 'coming to Jesus.' Now that He is in heaven, His Spirit and His Word,—His Word from His lips and His Spirit in, through, and with the Word are all that are left; and will these not satisfy? Have you never thought that if you saw your name written in the heavens, or on the sea-shore, and you knew that it had been traced by God's finger, you would then believe that you were saved; but do you think God will make another and special revelation for you? No, no—you must just take salvation as all the rest of us poor sinners have taken it, by believing the one Book.'

'But have I not to wait God's time?'

'God has only one time—that is, to-day. I read of to-morrow in the Bible. Pharaoh, wished the frogs taken from him but to-morrow. To-morrow is man's time. Now, to-day, is God's. If you came to a stream, would you sit down and say, I will wait till it flows past and when it is dry, then I will cross? Men are not such fools. God is waiting on you. He is calling you. He is beseeching you; and this is His one request, Take my Son whom I have given. He cries to every accountable and rational soul in this world, will you have Him?'

'Oh, if I could feel a something in me telling me that Christ was mine, I would believe it.'

'Quite wrong again. It is believing something outside of you, trusting Him at God's right hand, and resting on His *sure, eternal Word.*'

You will not throw this aside, will you, and say, I like it, or I do not like it? The poor sinner, saved

‘GRACE AND TRUTH.’

by the grace of God who writes to you, cannot save you nor can any man. Tell God what you are to do; tell God that He loves you; tell God that you trust Him; tell God that you believe Him; tell God that He has given you Jesus; tell God that you believe *that* also; tell God that He laid all your sins upon Jesus; tell God that you believe they were *on Him*, and therefore are not *on you*; tell God you have gone astray, but that you believe Him that your iniquity was laid on Jesus. Thank God for a *finished salvation in Christ*. Tell Him how well-pleased He is with Jesus instead of you; tell Him that you are

‘A poor sinner and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is your all in all.’

May God Himself shew you, for His name's sake, His simple Gospel of *Christ for you*. A beloved brother said, when coming out of the darkness of self, ‘It is the simplicity that stumbles me. It is too good news to be true.’ Yes, if man were in it; but it is not too good when we consider with what a God we have to do. You see God can overlook nothing. He can FORGIVE anything. He **can** by no means clear the guilty. He can take us out of the guilty Adam-standing, and put us into a new, a resurrection Christ-standing. He can save to the uttermost the blackest, vilest sinner that accepts (simply accepts) His gift, Jesus. Will you not receive Him? You may be in poverty, in nakedness, in misery, but God presents you with Jesus. He might have created a world for every one of us; but that would have been nothing compared with

what He has given—JESUS. You may have a hard fight here to make ends meet, but having Jesus it will be all the hell you will ever be in. You may have every comfort, and be altogether moral and good as far as man can judge, upright and religious, but without Jesus this will be all the heaven you will ever have. Religiousness, goodness, kindness, beneficence, uprightness, amiability, will not save you. Acceptance of God's gift alone will do so.

Now, what is it to be, ere we part, perhaps never to converse again for ever—God's simple gospel for the meanest, poorest, weakest capacity, so that even a fool may embrace it; or man's ways, follies, pleasures, religion, world? Jesus is offered to all. Some will accept Him, and some will refuse. You make God a liar if you do not accept. You make yourself a liar, and God true, if you accept Him. Some may know all about Christ the gift of God presented to them, and yet not know Himself. 'Tis eternal life to know Him.' By not receiving Him, they trample under foot the blood of the life-giving Prince. Others receive Him and thank God for Him and are saved.

May the blessed Spirit, the witnesser of Jesus, open the eyes of every reader to see Him, incline every fellow-sinner to believe God, and accept His gift.

Call your heart a liar, and believe the record of the only living and true God.

**Nothing, Lord, I bring before Thee,
Nothing that can meet Thy face;**

But in Jesus I adore Thee,
 For the riches of Thy grace.
 Jesus came in love from heaven,
 By the Father's love was given,
 From that death. He now has risen,
 Which He died for me.
 Jesus died for the sinner,
 Jesus died for the sinner,
 Jesus died for the sinner,
 Jesus died for me.

'Come to me,' Thy lips have spoken:
 As I am, O Lord, I come;
 All Thy laws I oft have broken,
 From Thy side afar did roam.

Boundless love hast Thou been showing
 Settling every just demand;
 Jesus as my own I'm knowing,
 Thus obey Thy great command

This the work that stands for ever,
 All my works are useless dross;
 Jesus mine! yes, nought can sever
 Me from Him of Calvary's cross.

Precious blood of Him forsaken
 On that cross, in wrath, by God,
 Cleanses me; His life was taken,
 When made sin for me He stood.

'Look to me,' He said, who's risen,
 Jesus Christ my Saviour Lord;
 Mortal eye can't enter heaven,
 But I see Thee in Thy Word.

Trust Him, claim Him, O believe Him,
 All was done Thy trust to gain;
 On Him rest, and now receive Him,
 And with Him for ever reign.

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'Ye Must be Born Again.'

Our Regeneration.



THOUGH you knew all the duties incumbent upon a royal Prince, this knowledge would not make you a royal Prince. You must be in a position before you can act under the laws of that position. This is the natural order admitted by all men in human things, but quite reversed when they begin to speculate on divine things. God's order is this—I make you sons: walk like sons. Man says, try to walk like sons, and after a shorter or longer time you will be made sons. But we must be brought out of the kingdom of darkness before we can take the first step in the kingdom of light. Before we can enter this kingdom we must have a nature capable of enjoying it. A nature can be implanted only by birth; therefore we must be born again. This subject is gone fully into in John iii.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus, and said to Him, 'WE KNOW,' &c.

Jesus answered him by saying, 'Except a man BE BORN AGAIN,' &c.

There is a great difference between what we *know* and what we *are*; a great difference between

our attainments, education, talents, knowledge, and our standing before God, and our relation to God. Nicodemus was an inquiring man, who had been convinced of Christ's claims by external evidences, and whose conscience was now seeking after something deeper and more satisfactory. He comes with this profession of knowledge, 'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.' (John iii. 2.) Jesus, because He knew all men, and all the thoughts of men, answered not the words but the need of Nicodemus, by shewing that all his knowledge would never save him or any other man; for 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus by nature, however well-instructed, could never see God's kingdom.

4.—CHRIST NOT A TEACHER OF THE OLD NATURE.
HE IS FIRST A SAVIOUR, THEN A TEACHER.

In the present day, in certain quarters, we hear a good deal about Christ as the perfect man, the perfect example, and the perfect teacher; but here is the answer of Jesus Himself to all such compliments. He came not to teach the old nature—not to teach man as sprung from Adam, but to seek and save the lost, to give the new nature, and to teach saved men. The policy of all who have openly, or in thought, denied the divinity of Christ, is to laud His moral teaching and his God-like example. They bring well-known and fondly-

cherished truths forward, as if only they believed and preached these great facts; but at the outset they forget this insurmountable barrier to all moral reclamation of the old nature of man, 'Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

We find others, however, who know Christ not merely as a teacher, but who also believe in His divinity, that He is God as well as man. In fact, many in our land know every fundamental doctrine in the Bible; but a mere knowledge of doctrine, however true, never introduced a son of Adam into the kingdom of God. Men may have learned what justification, and sanctification, and adoption are; they may be able to distinguish minutely between all the creeds, isms, and heresies, they may be theoretically orthodox, may be able to judge preachers and sermons, may be very ready freely to criticise most men they hear, and graciously pay beautiful compliments to their special favourites, as Nicodemus did to Jesus. They may know, moreover, about the new birth, its necessity and divine origin; but notwithstanding all this, they could not dare to say, as before God, 'Whereas we were blind, now we see.' The greatest amount of theological education never yet saved a man. Creed, or the belief in a certain amount of doctrine, has made Christendom, but never made a Christian, 'Ye must be born again.'

Others again, when their consciences have been reached, try to get this new birth brought about, and begin most zealously to train and trim, to

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educate and reform their old nature, quite ignorant of what is meant by '*born again.*'

II.—THE OLD NATURE UNCHANGED AND UNCHANGEABLE.

Nicodemus wondered how a man when old could be brought again into this world; but if it were possible, what better would he be? He might have changed his circumstances by this new birth according to the flesh; but would he have changed kingdoms? He would still be in the kingdom of the first Adam; he would still be flesh; for Jesus goes on to say, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh,' (ver. 6). Water never rose above its level: that which is produced is of the same nature as that which produces. We find people to-day who think that if they were in other circumstances they would have a better chance of getting saved. The rich man thinks that if he were poor, he might have time to think of religion. The poor man, if he could get ends to meet, and had a little more money, would have more leisure to think of God. But the difficulty is not so much in what is *around us*, as in what is *within us*.

Again, the aids of religion are called in, in order that *the flesh* may be *improved*; but after all attempts it is found to be only religious flesh. Man may have all varieties of it; but it never rose to see the kingdom of God. In nature, we speak of the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. If we took a rose from the latter of these kingdoms, and cultivated it and trained it, and by our various arts made it produce all its varieties, we

never by these means could bring it into the other kingdom—into the animal kingdom. Or, again, If I take a nettle from the roadside, and bring it into my garden or my hothouse, watch over, dress, water, and warm it, I may produce beautiful nettles, and beautiful varieties of nettle, but I never could get apples from it; that which is produced from the nettle is nettle. We can never gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles?

Man by nature is in the kingdom of the first Adam: no amount of reformation, amelioration, cultivation, civilisation, or religiousness, can bring one single man into the kingdom of God. Look through Great Britain and Ireland,—what is the object of the great bulk or the religious machinery? Is it not for cultivating the flesh, in order that, after death, it may see the kingdom of God? This is no guess. It is the sad confession of godly men in all the churches—godly bishops, godly rectors, godly pastors, elders and deacons. All unite in the same complaint, and do their best against it. The majority of respectable religious people, as good as Nicodemus, a master in Israel, do not know the practical power of this truth which stands at the door of God's kingdom. They put salvation at the end of a long series of self-improving processes—God puts the salvation of the soul at the very beginning, and all duties that in their discharge can honour Him, are founded upon this fact. 'Man's chief end is' (not to get the soul saved, but) 'to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever'—starting with being saved for nothing as the means to this end.

III.—THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A NEW NATURE.

Before I can enter God's kingdom I must have a new nature, that can appreciate, see, live in, and enjoy that kingdom. Ask a blind man what red is. He has no idea of it because he cannot see, because he has not the capacity. Educate him in the mixing of colours. Tell him that blue and yellow mixed make green; he may soon remember this, and *know* much more; by that knowledge he never *saw* a colour.

The questions therefore of most importance to you are not, do you know doctrine? do you know Christ's teaching? do you know your Bible? do you know the evidences of Christianity? do you know that Christ is God, that Christ is a Saviour? that He is able and willing to save? You may know all that, and be lost for ever. But, are you born again? Are you a partaker of a new nature, a divine nature? Are you an heir of God? Is your standing now in Christ or in Adam?

Before I can see the kingdom of God, I must have the nature implanted that belongs to that kingdom. This is something more than a mere thought of sin forgiven, or righteousness obtained. It is a question of capacity, of fitness to enjoy, of likeness of nature. What an awful thought, that so many religiously-educated people are lost! What a hell, where the good, decent religious sons of Adam have to be for ever shut up with the profane and the drunkard, and the abominable and the unclean!

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Reader, I entreat of you, think. Think for a moment, did Jesus speak truth or tell lies? If He spoke truth, those who have not *been born again*, however intelligent, educated, moral, benevolent, or religious, can never see the kingdom of God, and must, therefore, be swept away for ever with the lost, for there are only two places. What a hell! Frequenters of cathedrals and frequenters of gin-palaces, tract-distributors and pick-pockets, drawing-room-meeting religionists and the offscourings of the streets! Priests who, with solemn mien, pretended to stand between the people and God, and murderers who have been hung for their crimes! Teachers who knew everything in theology, and the profane, the swearer, the blasphemer, the infidel! These things will turn out true, whether you believe them or not. It was seen in the days of Noah. Is it to be your bitter experience? Hell is real. Eternal punishment is real. Christ's words are true, although they may be doubted, or denied by the majority of men. The awful fact remains. Stop, therefore, high or low, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, intelligent or ignorant, religious man or blasphemer, respectable or profane, think and ask yourself these questions, *Am I born again? Have I a new life?*—a life communicated by the Spirit of God through the truth—born not of flesh, but of water (the word, Eph. v. 26) and the Spirit. *Have I been born twice*—once into this world of Adam, and again into that of God? Friend, if you have not this new birth, it were better that you had never been born; but now as you are, and where you are, whenever you are

convinced of the necessity of this new birth, look and live; believe and be saved; take God at His word: He says, 'Ye *must* be born again;' and in the same chapter it is written, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever BELIEVETH ON Him should not perish, but have ETERNAL LIFE.'—What God demands, God provides.

IV.—HOW THE NEW NATURE IS IMPLANTED.

This new nature is not implanted by a process, but received by an act of faith. This new nature never sets aside as to actual fact the old, never amalgamates, never becomes incorporated with it, never improves it, but 'lusts' against it in the believer, wars against it, is 'contrary' to it. And how is it implanted? Reader, this is of the greatest importance to you. Are you to look for the new birth in your own frames or feelings, to an ordinance or an act of man. A mistake here is fatal—"Ye must be born again."—How?

Jesus answers this, and gives us the three things that are divinely and absolutely essential for the new birth, (John iii. 7,) seeing the kingdom, (ver. 3,) entering the kingdom, (ver. 5,) or having eternal life, (ver. 15,) all these being but different aspects of the same truth. These three essentials are—

1. Water, (ver. 5.)
 2. The Spirit. (ver. 5 and 8.)
 3. The Son of man lifted up, (ver. 14.)
- Let us consider each shortly:—

I.—WATER.

'Except a man be born of WATER and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (ver. 5.)

It cannot in any way refer to baptism by water, the application of literal water to a man externally, as that would only wash his body and could not touch his inner man. Some would read the text, 'except a man be born of baptism,' and of course by this doctrine Old Testament saints could not be in the kingdom of God, as they were not baptized. Circumcision could not save a man. 'Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. . . . Circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter.' (Rom ii. 28, 29.) No change on a man externally can profit. He may apply much nitre and wash himself with much soap, but his leopard spots of sin, still remain. Nor will mere education, reformation, cultivation, training of the old nature, turn flesh into spirit. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh;' it may be decent or indecent flesh, religious or irreligious, pious or profane, but still flesh.

Some seeing this, and understanding it, have now asked what can the 'water' mean? This has been answered in several ways. Some say it is the same as the Spirit, others that it is the same as the blood, but 'there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood,' so that if water was only another way of expressing either the working of the Spirit or the cleansing of the blood, there would be only two bearing testimony—the Spirit and the blood and the water standing for either. We can

olve the question by asking what should have come into the mind of Nicodemus when Christ spoke of *water*? He, a master in Israel, knew of a laver where every priest had to wash before he could enter into the holy place, for no unwashed foot ever trod that holy place. He, a master in Israel, knew the book of Ezekiel, and the promise to be fulfilled in a coming day to Israel. 'Then will I sprinkle clean *water* upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My *statutes*; and ye shall keep My judgments and do *them*.' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.)

A teacher in Israel should have been looking for the antitype of temple and laver, and the true water of purification sprinkled to cleanse from defilement. He should have been conversant with the 119th Psalm, which definitely explains what the water is: (ver. 9,) 'Wherewithal shall a young man *cleanse* his way? By taking heed according to Thy *word*.'

The water here spoken of by Christ and typified in the Old Testament, is the WORD OF GOD, the embodiment, the revelation of God's thoughts.

Let us search the Scriptures as to this: 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass.' (1 Pet. i. 23.) In our text 'flesh' is contrasted with the 'spirit,' here flesh is contrasted with the 'Word.' 'The seed is the *Word of God*' (Luke

'YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.'

viii. 11). 'The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, . . . The *Word is nigh thee*' (Rom. x. 6-8.) 'Of his own will begat He us with *the Word* of truth' (James i. 18). 'Ye are *clean* through *the Word* which I have spoken unto you' (John xv. 3).

These all show that THE WORD is used by GOD in the new birth in that place where Christ speaks of water to Nicodemus, but we have more direct evidence in Eph. v. 26, 'That He might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of water by *the Word*.' Thus, from Old Testament type, from New Testament analogy, and from direct scriptural statement in both Old and New Testaments, the *water* in the new birth is proved to be the '*Word of God*.'

And most important it is to see this. How am I born again by *the word*? Water cleanses by displacement. Uncleaness and water cannot occupy the same space at the same moment: the water displaces the uncleaness, and thus cleanses. The Word of God does not act by teaching 'the flesh,' but by displacing all the thoughts of 'the flesh' and putting in those of God.

The entrance of God's word gives light, (Psalm cxix. 130). Man was lost by hearing Satan, he is saved by hearing God. Man, in his natural Adam-standing, is a chaos—nothing in him can meet or please the eye of God—he is without form and void, darkness brooding over him. When God, therefore, begins to re-create him, (for 'we are *His* workmanship, *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works,' Eph. ii. 10.)

He says, 'Let light be,' and light is; and it is by the entrance of His word that this is done.

This word of God judges everything in man; it puts God and His requirements before man. Human opinion is entirely set aside. By nature we are all apt to rest satisfied that there are many worse than we. If I am lost, many will have a bad chance, is sometimes said, and quite true, for God's Word tells us we are all guilty, and, as we saw in a former chapter, 'there is no difference,' all condemned already, equally condemned. We compare ourselves with one another, or according as men are estimated, bad, good, or indifferent. God's Word comes like water, and washes out all our thoughts and opinions.

'It's my idea,' says one, 'if one tries to live a good life, this is all he can do.' Of course, this is your idea, but all our thoughts are evil, and unless God's Word displaces our ideas we are undone.

'It's my opinion,' says another, 'that we must just do the best we can, and trust in the mercy of God.' Of course this is your opinion—but the action of God's Word is like water to wash out our opinions. The first thing it tells me about myself and about us all is that we are lost, depraved, guilty, condemned.

But more; the Word of God brings in God's mind about Himself instead of my own; it lets God think for me, God speak for me, God act for me; it makes me passive, because I can be nothing else.

'Hear, and your soul shall live' (Isa. lv. 3). Life is on its syllables—man begins to speak, to pray, &c., when he wants to be saved—God says,

Hear! God is praying to us, and should we not answer God's prayer before we begin to pray. He does beseech men by us (2 Cor. v. 20). His prayer is easily answered, He says, ‘Will you have my Son?’ and the answer is ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ By thus hearing the Word of God, and understanding it, (Matt. xiii. 23,) we receive a new life from God in which God's thoughts reside, and in which they act. Let us now look at the Spirit's work in regeneration.

2.—THE SPIRIT.

We must be born of the SPIRIT—not the Spirit apart from the Word—not the Word apart from the Spirit—not two births—but the one divine new birth. We see Spirit and Word as the *living water*; (John vii. 38). ‘He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.’ This was seen at Pentecost, when the rivers of living water (read Peter's sermon, a number of Old Testament quotations,) flowed out to the salvation of thousands, the words of God carried home by the Spirit—hence *living water*; the Word is the water, but it is stagnant or dead without the Spirit—Spirit and Word make *living water*. Again, Jesus said, (John vi. 63,) ‘the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.’ Mere moral suasion, as it is called, never yet saved a man. This Word only operates as God's Spirit applies it. The vehicle is the Word, but the power is the Spirit.

If people are famishing in a town, and we intend

to send supplies to them, we load the vans and waggons with bread and corn, and make up a large train. The entrance of these waggons will bring life to many a famished family, to many a dying man. Why delay, then? why is the train lying useless at this station where there is plenty? We are waiting for that powerful engine which will speed it along. Screw up the coupling, make all fast; and now not only is the feast ready, but feast and guests are brought together. Christ Himself is the bread, the Word is the waggon, and the Spirit is the engine or power that brings Christ in the Word to us poor perishing sinners.

God made a great feast, and bade many (Luke xiv. 16); none came, and 'none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper,' is now what God has said. No merely invited guest ever came. We preach 'Come,' we tell that all things are ready, that the feast is spread, the door open, that 'yet there is room;' but no man by this mere invitation ever came; as one has said, 'God has to fill the chairs, as well as the table.' Five yoke of oxen or a piece of ground are of much more value to a natural man than the richest feast of God. God has to provide the guests as well as the feast. If there were no Christ provided, there would be no feast; if there were no Spirit working, there would be no guests.

Ye must be born of the Spirit. Like produces like. 'That which is born of the flesh' is not merely like 'the flesh,' but is 'flesh,' and 'that which is born of the Spirit' is not like the Spirit, nor is it the Spirit,

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This is something quite different from 'the flesh' being pardoned, then taught, then toned down, pervaded, and sanctified, by the Spirit. We have the man, the I, the existing person with undivided responsibility, 'born again' by the thoughts of God acting in him in power, and the mind and nature of God communicated to him by the Spirit; and this now is the man's life, as the 'flesh' was his life before. No Christian can have his standing 'in the flesh.' Alas, that ever any of us should walk in the flesh: 'we are not in the flesh;' alas, the flesh is in us still.

A boat has been sailing on the salt ocean, it has come through many a storm, and half full of the briny water, it is now sailing on the fresh water of the river. It is no longer in the salt water, but the salt water is in it. The Christian has got off the Adam-sea for ever. He is in the Christ-river for ever. Adam is still in him, which he is to mortify and to throw out, but he is not in Adam. He has now a power, and a position, and inclination to judge himself. He knows himself. It was at this point that Paul exclaimed, 'I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing.' He is not two persons, but in the one person he has, and will have to his last hour here, two natures diametrically opposite, and actively opposing each other. He now sees that 'the flesh,' lusts against the 'Spirit,' but the Spirit also against the 'flesh,' in order that he may not walk as he used to walk; that these are contrary,

and therefore never can be friends, and that he has in him, and will have in him, a foe that is neither to be trifled with nor trusted, but watched, warred with, and mortified.

But his life is in his new nature. He is now a 'partaker of the divine nature,' 'born of God,' 'an heir of God;' and thus it is with every one who is born of the Spirit, Jew or Gentile, for God acts here in sovereignty. Connection with Abraham only gave them a fleshly standing, but a new thing is needed by the Jew as well as the Gentile, and is as free to the Gentile as to the Jew.

The eighth verse of John iii. is a most blessed verse. In it we poor sinners of the Gentiles have got in. Reader never quarrel with the royal prerogative of God's grace; read Rom. ix., and see that if we do not let God be absolute we have no chance of salvation, for we are all equally 'condemned already.' Praise His grace that hath now appeared to every nation under heaven.

But passing over Christ's testimony of the Father as given in verses nine to thirteen—(prophets had prophesied, but here is *God Himself*)—let us now look at

3.—THE SON OF MAN LIFTED UP.

This, indeed, is our life. Christ said, 'Ye **MUST** be born again;' but here is another **MUST** that He mentions, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so **MUST** the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on Him should not

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perish but have everlasting life.' God says, *Ye must*, but He also says, *I must*. Your Adam-life is forfeited, and you are under condemnation. The Son of Man lifted up is the answer to the forfeit. Satan, who has the power of death, and has every man in his power (for all have sinned), has been destroyed as to his power, his head having been bruised by Christ on the cross. (Heb. ii. 14.) But Christ is now risen, and can communicate His life to any one who believes in Him, He having satisfied every demand of God. The new birth is the communication of a new life. Christ beyond the doom of sin is that life; Christ incarnate before His death cannot be 'our life,' because the judgment against the old life can only be met in *death*.

The 'corn of wheat' *must* die before the fruit can be produced. The resurrection-life of Christ is therefore the new life preached to the *sinner*, and implanted in him on his *believing*—a life that is perfect, impeccable, indestructible, eternal as the Christ of God is—a life that has already proved victorious over the cross of shame, over death's strongest power—a life that will ere long swallow up mortality.

The Spirit of God applies the Word that speaks about the lifted-up Christ whom we receive and rest upon for salvation, and this is the new birth. Such a life is offered only to a *sinner*—what a comfort! No righteous man, no earth-wise, no rich man ever entered the kingdom of God as such—only as justified sinners. None but *redeemed* sinners sing the song of that kingdom—none but those who, guilty,

depraved, lost, have taken their place with roused consciences at the foot of the cross, and there seen the lifted-up Christ. All in that kingdom are '*new creatures,*' clothed in 'the best robe,' with the 'ring,' and the 'shoes,' and 'the fatted calf' slain. What perfection is in the Word of God! The Word tells me that unless I am born again I cannot enter God's kingdom; but the same Word tells me that if I am born again (though only a babe now) I am as sure of spending eternity with my Lord as if I were with Him. No hatred of devils, no enmity of the world, no power of the flesh, shall keep me out. We enter God's kingdom by being born again. We *have* eternal life even now. We have the germs of heaven even here. We do not wait for that life; but 'he that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life' (ver. 36).

We have tried to shew thus briefly what is meant by being 'born of water and of the Spirit.' Read 1 John v. 6—'This is He that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For they that bear witness are three; the *Spirit*, and the *water*, and the *blood*, and the three agree in one.' (Correct translation.)

The *blood* is for expiation; that is, the Son of man lifted up on the cross, and His life taken for ours. 'This is He that came by water and blood' (1 John v. 6).

The *water* is for moral cleansing; that is, the Word of God applied in power to our consciences. Jesus 'came not by water only' (that is to say, not

'YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.'

merely a teacher of the word), 'but by water and blood' (He came certainly as the great teacher, also as the great sacrifice making atonement for sin).

The *Spirit* is the witness from the throne of God to the value of that blood in the presence of God, and the witness to our spirits by applying the word (water), and thus morally cleansing. He is also the source, the framer, and the power of expression of every new feeling, thought, affection, or purpose in the new creation, 'and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.'

These three agree in one, meet in one point, work out one thing in their testimony, and this is the testimony, that 'God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life' (1 John v. 11, 12).

What any sinner, therefore, has to do in this new birth is to look to Christ on the cross; and where is he to look to Him now as crucified but in *the Word*. He is to believe what God says about His Son. God says I have given you Christ (John iii. 16). I believe it: therefore I thank God. I do not ask myself do I feel it? but God says it—I appropriate it as mine—I believe His Word by putting in my name where God puts His 'whosoever.' In this Word of God we get the Spirit's witness—that is, God's testimony about His Son. God does the *work*: we believe the *Word*.

Reader, are you *born again*? You are not satisfied with yourself. Nor is God satisfied with you. You are not satisfied with your estimate of the work of Christ. Are you satisfied with God.

estimate of it? The Spirit has come to tell out to us the value of that blood. Faith does not consist in my valuing it, but in my accepting God's value of it. God says, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.'

If you do not believe God's witness, the Spirit of God in the Word, about His Son, you simply make God a liar. Now you must either make yourself a liar or God. Do you not think that it would be the better way to say, 'Let God be true and every man a liar'—myself the first liar? A man does not like to be called a liar, but God says, 'every man.' Until a man calls himself a liar, he makes God one. 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.' As long as you look within yourself for one idea, one opinion, one thought, you are listening to a liar. Call your heart a liar at once and simply take God at His word, receive His Son as He has given Him to you.

Reader, art *thou* born again? There was a moment that every Israelite had between being bitten and dying; that moment was given him to look and LIVE. That is thy brief moment of life, hast thou looked and lived? God can do no more than He has done to provide life for thee. He spared not His Son!

Do not look to thy wounds, to thy sins, and think thus to get peace. Try no longer earth's prayers, or religions, or works of righteousness. They are

but ointments to thy sores, that will never heal, but look away from all to the serpent on the pole. The question is not, whether thou hast great faith or little faith. It did not depend upon the length of the look, nor the earnestness of the look, it was the fact of looking that cured the bitten Israelite. Look and live! thou hast **only one** brief yet sufficient moment of time.

But how are men spending this little moment? In making money, in indulging the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life! In gathering together the dust of their condemned cell into heaps and calling it riches! In gathering the straws that lie in their prison, and making crowns, and madman-like, playing at kings while death is written as their doom; and the door of escape stands still open!

God is standing over them with this awful word, 'YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN,' and this other wondrous word, 'THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP.' He delivered up His Son to death. What a holy God! What a just, righteous, truthful God! When sin was lying on the sinless Christ, He could not let it pass. Do you think He will let *you* pass now after that awful day at Calvary? It is there that we read the doom of sin. How shall we escape from Him if we neglect His 'so great salvation?' For it is not with God merely as a judge we have to do; for it was His *love* that planned and wrought the whole redemption work. Doubly bitter will be your cup of wrath that you have spurned the salvation of such a God who desires to be known by

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you as LOVE; for in order that *any* poor sinner might be born again, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (John iii. 16.)

Let us suppose that you are convinced of these important realities; that you are lost, that therefore your first need is a *Saviour*, not a *teacher*; that you have not a nature capable of enjoying God; that the new nature is gotten by your being born; born again of water (the word) and the Spirit, but you cannot understand how this comes about. You cannot understand what is meant by looking to Christ as the bitten Israelites looked to the serpent on the pole. Let me illustrate it by a conversation I had, one day, with a man who had been hearing the gospel preached, and with whom I had to walk some miles.

I began by asking, 'Have you ever thought of the great salvation?'

'O yes,' he replied; 'I have often thought about it.'

'And are you saved?'

'Well I could not say that—I don't feel as I would like.'

'I quite believe that; but do you think any of us could ever feel perfectly right in this world? But are you at peace with God?'

'I never could say that I am satisfied with myself.'

'But, my friend, I did not ask if you were. It would be a very bad sign if you were satisfied with yourself. But are you at peace with God?'

‘Well, I never could feel that I have peace.’

‘But I don’t ask if you feel at peace with yourself; I hope you never will. Have you peace with God?’

‘To tell you the truth, I am not right.’

‘How long is it since you began to think of these things?’

‘About seven or eight years ago, in the north of Ireland, I was first awakened by a minister preaching on *‘Ye must be born again.’* And often since that time I have been trying to feel God’s Spirit working in me.’

‘And you never have?’

‘No; I could not be sure.’

‘How could ever any one be sure of what was going on within him, especially as our enemy comes as an angel of light.’

‘Well, what am I to do, then?’

‘Jesus was the one, you remember, that said, “Ye must be born again.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Now, at the end of all this conversation Nicodemus did not know how to be saved, but only said, “How can these things be?” even when Jesus Himself was the great Teacher.’

‘That’s just where I am.’

‘Now, what did Jesus do? He took him away to the picture-book for children, and showed him the picture of a dying man looking away from himself to a serpent on a pole, and thus obtaining life; and told him that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of

man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Now all you have to do is to look and live.'

'But that is just what I've been trying to do, and what I don't know how to do:—what is it to look to Christ?'

'Now I can understand your difficulty; you cannot see Christ with the eyes of your body; you cannot see Him in vision; you say that you cannot feel His presence within you; you cannot feel that you have faith.'

'Exactly; what am I to do?'

'Allow me to give you an illustration.' In some such words I spoke with my friend, and gave him the substance of the following illustration, which seemed to clear away his difficulty; and I trust, by God's blessing, it may enable you to receive God's simple plan, and accept God's salvation for nothing.

You have a rent — say £10 a-year — to pay, having to maintain a large family, and having been recently in distress and out of work, you find it impossible to pay it. Let us suppose that I was able, knew your difficulty, took pity on you, and said to you—

John, I hear you have your rent coming on, and having had very hard times, you will never be able to pay it. Now I wish you to use your money for your most pressing wants, to get food and clothing for your wife and family, and *look to me for the rent*. You, knowing me, and hence believing me, would go away home with a burden off your mind and a happy heart. When you came home next Satur-

day with your wages, you would tell your wife to spend all the money in getting food and clothing.

'But, John,' she would say, 'are we not to lay aside something for the rent?'

'Oh no,' you would answer; 'I met a man whom I know, and he said, *Look to me for the rent*, and I believe him.'

And thus weeks would go on, till shortly before the rent-day a neighbour comes in and says—

'John, I have only got £5 gathered for my rent, and I don't know what I'm to do. How much have you?'

'None at all.'

'What! have you nothing gathered?'

'No, for a friend of mine said, *Look to me for the rent*.'

'And are you not getting anxious about it?'

'No.'

'Why?'

'Because I trust him.'

'Why?'

'Because I believe him.'

'Why?'

'Because I know him.'

By and by the rent-day comes, and even your wife begins to be suspicious and doubtful, but you have implicit trust in what I said—you have no difficulty in understanding what *look to me for the rent* means; and so, at the appointed hour, I walk in and make my word good, and am happy to find that, against all your neighbour's doubts, against all your wife's fears, and even against all your own

tremblings, you have trusted my word and looked to me for the rent.

This is, of course, just an illustration, as I have no doubt you are at the present quite able and willing to pay your own rent; but in the matter of our salvation, though we might be willing, we are totally unable; so the Lord now says, 'Look to Me, and be ye saved.'

Christ on the cross has satisfied God's justice. He paid the debt for the sinner. Men are doing perfectly right things; praying, living moral lives, and giving money for charitable purposes, but all for the wrong end. All these will never save. God says, '*Look to Me for salvation,*' and then begin to use your time, talents, money, powers, for their legitimate end, to glorify God. Do not try to be holy in order to be saved. That would be like the man laying up for a rent which he could never pay. '*Look to Me and be saved,*' says God, and then be holy, because you are sure of salvation on the authority of God. Religion will never save you—even pure religion. God defines pure religion in James i. 27: 'Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' By the deeds of the law we cannot be justified; therefore by doing all this we cannot be saved. Religion is the life of a saved man, not the efforts of an unsaved man to get saved. We do not try to do good in order to get a new nature, but we try to do good because we have received a new nature. The work which God will

accept from you is not *to* the cross, it is *from* the cross to the crown. Jesus did *ALL* the *saving-work*. He brought the cross to our level. Get saved by looking to Him, and then live to God. Do not look to the feeling of being saved—look away from what is being wrought *in* you to what was wrought *for* you. We are not saved on account of the Spirit working in us, but by means of His work—we are saved on account of Christ dying for us. We are not saved *for* faith but *through* faith. 'Look to me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.'

Lie down as a wounded, helpless, wretched sinner, and look away from yourself to Jesus crucified for sin

Look unto Me and be ye saved—

Look, men of nations all;
Look rich and poor, look old and young
Look sinners great and small!

Look unto Me and be ye saved—

Look now, nor dare delay;
Look as you are—lost, guilty, dead—
Look while 'tis called to-day!

Look unto Me and be ye saved—

Look from your doubts and fears;
Look from your sins of crimson dye,
Look from your prayers and tears!

Look unto Me and be ye saved—

Look to the work all done,
Look to the pierced Son of Man,
Look to your sin all gone!

Do you feel your Sins Forgiven?

Our Assurance.

DO you *feel* that your sins are all forgiven?
'Indeed I do not; but I *know* they are.'

'Now, I cannot understand that. How can any one know it?'

'If you had wronged me, and I told you that I forgave you, would you not know it?'

'Most certainly; but how can you say that God ever told you that He forgave you? Did you just feel at a certain time something that you thought was God's voice, inwardly telling you that your sins were pardoned?'

'I certainly did not.'

'Then how can it be? I have tried to get converted as hard as any man could; I have prayed for grace, for strength, for the pardon of my sins, and for the Holy Spirit, and I do not yet feel any difference, and I never could feel as I have heard some men say they have.'

'I quite understand you; I was for years in the same condition.'

'Then how did you get out of it? I know all about the plan of salvation, about the work of Christ,

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and the necessity of the Spirit; that we must be justified by grace through faith alone without the works of the law; that the promises are all most certainly secure to them that are in Christ; but how am I ever to know whether I am in Him or not?

'I know that you may have heard some Christians say they *feel* they are pardoned, they *feel* they are saved; but this only tends to mislead. It did mislead me, and I have no doubt it is misleading you. These Christians may mean a right thing, but they state it wrongly. I feel happy because I *know* that my sins are pardoned; and I will shew you how I know that by and by; but I do not *feel* that my sins are pardoned. Let us suppose a case. A poor widow has no money to pay her debts. The creditor comes demanding his righteous due. A friend steps in, and says to the creditor, "I'll pay you the widow's debt;" he puts down the money, and the creditor hands him a slip of paper on which is written, "Received from Widow Blank the sum due, settled," with the creditor's signature affixed. The receipt is handed to the widow, and she feels very happy *because* she knows that her debt is paid. If you were to call that day, and say to the widow, "Do you *feel* that your debt is paid?" what would she say?'

'Feel it! What do you mean? There is the receipted account. I don't feel that it's paid, but I *feel* very happy *because it is paid.*'

'Now, do you not see the difference? The feeling is all right, but I do not feel my sin pardoned. I know it, and hence feel happy.'

'But does it not say somewhere in Scripture that the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits?'

'Now from the very fact that you speak so vaguely about "somewhere in Scripture," I fear that you do not know well what Scripture is. The Bible is not a number of texts strung together at random: it is a perfectly arranged whole. Truth in a wrong connexion is the worst kind of error. You find in Romans viii. 16, this most blessed and wondrous revelation from God, that "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." Mark carefully, this is not given as a ground to know that our sins are forgiven; but comes after the whole revelation of the truth concerning what we have done and what we are, and how our responsibilities are met. It comes after the triumphant assertion of Romans v. 1, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God," and that crowning triumph after every question has been settled against us, "There is no condemnation." (Rom. viii. 1.) At peace with God, and no condemnation, we now advance into our peculiar place among the creatures of God. Angels are at peace with God and have no condemnation, but they are only servants. Here is something additional, "We are sons of God." Being taken from the swine trough, and getting food and content, we would therewith be content, glad that we were in the house at all, even among the servants. But higher than servants are we become, even sons. We may well pause, and say, is this presumption? Dare we say that all things are mine? that I am a child,

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son, an heir of God? Yes! indeed you may; the Spirit has been sent to dwell with you and to be in you, as coming from the throne revealing to your spirit (which can now discern spiritual things) that, without presumption, you may lay claim to the title, the relationship, of son of God, heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. That Spirit is within every believer, and seals only saved ones. He quickens the unsaved. God has sent forth this testimony, and he that is a believer has the 'testimony in himself' (1 John v. 10). The important point I wish you to see is this, that the Holy Ghost is never said to bear witness to me, by any internal feeling, that I am at peace with God. It is after a man knows he is a saved man that then there is a step further shewn him—namely, that he is a son. He is not only out of prison: he is set at the table of the King whom he calls "Abba," that is, Father.'

'I quite understand the distinction, but I never saw it before; but if I could know that I was at peace with God I would be quite satisfied.'

'Yes, but God would not; however, this is the first point for you to know—"being justified by *faith* we have peace with God," not by the *feeling* of faith.'

'But don't some people feel it while others do not?'

'Not at all. What I am contending for is, that the forgiveness of sins is a thing that can be felt by no one: and, unless the knowledge of it is founded on the word of God, and that alone, for every one, individually, it will be sinking sand for a

deathbed. Scores of anxious people have been deluded into the idea that they knew the gospel when some pleasing emotion passed through their minds. When Satan sees people awakened, and that he cannot keep them quiet, he takes his stand beside the preacher of the gospel, and while he is inviting them to the rock, Satan pushes out planks of feeling. A drowning man will catch at a straw, and the poor troubled one finds a little relief in resting on some plank of quietness of conscience, till storms rage, and then he finds himself with nothing beneath him. I am therefore suspicious when a person tells me he is "a little better." If he does not believe the gospel, he has no right to be any better, and if he has taken the good news to himself, he is entitled to be at perfect peace.'

'Then you don't allow of any feeling?'

'Most certainly I do: but what am I warranted to feel? If I could tell you that you were saved, and you believed it, would you not feel happy?'

'Of course I would.'

'This is what I feel—whenever I say to myself, "I'm saved," don't I feel happy? and the more I realise that my knowledge that I am saved depends only on God's word, the more happy I become.'

'Is there nothing about this "feeling saved" in the Bible.'

'Indeed, there is not. You can easily satisfy yourself by turning to a concordance. Never once is the word put beside "salvation," "forgiveness," or, in fact, anything about a man's peace with God, but we find, in Luke i. 77, that part of John's com-

mission is declared to be "to give KNOWLEDGE of salvation," and in many parts of Scripture we find "knowing our sins forgiven," "knowing in whom we have believed," "knowing we have passed from death to life," "knowing we are born of God." Did Abraham feel he was to have a son when he was so old? No! but he knew it. And how did he know it? Because God said it. He felt glad because he knew it, because he believed what God said. It is really because people do not believe that God means exactly what He says, that we see so many intelligent men who cannot say whether *they* are saved or not.'

'But I have often thought that I had received Christ and trusted in Him alone; but I find my faith so incapable of producing effects.'

'But did you start saying "I'm saved," before trying to do anything?'

'O no! I was always waiting for fruits.'

'Fruits of what? fruits of doubt? Suppose you had got the right fruits, would you then have believed you were saved?'

'O yes!'

'That is to say, you would trust the fruits you brought forth rather than God's word—not for your salvation, but for your knowledge of it. But you must be saved, and know you are saved, before one acceptable fruit can be brought forth—else the works are legal. All evangelical obedience is done by a man who is *saved*, and who *does* it because *he* knows that he is saved.'

'Then am I to do nothing?'

'Absolutely and literally nothing. You must take salvation exactly as the thief on the cross did. He could not turn over a new leaf; his last wretched leaf had been turned in reviling his Saviour. He could not do any work for God, for there was a nail through each hand; he could not run in the way of God's commandments, for there was a nail through his feet. And until you stand still and realize that there is a nail through all your self-righting activity, and a nail through all your carnal agility, and accept salvation for nothing, knowing that you are saved simply on the authority of the bare Word of God, you will never be saved. We do not look inward to what we feel, nor outward to what we do—but to the Son of Man lifted up, and to God's account of how well He is pleased with Jesus.'

'Well, I think I see what you mean, and it clears up a real difficulty. I am not to examine to see if I *feel* better, *feel* saved, *feel* forgiven, or *feel* happy; but here is the next difficulty—how am I to know it?'

'I well remember that when I began trying to feel converted, I felt myself becoming worse and worse, and my heart getting further and further from peace. Then I began to study this and that theological question. I knew all about what Calvinism and Arminianism were—studied my Bible till I knew its contents pretty well, but at last I found I was not on the right track for salvation at all. I was thinking that salvation came *intellect-wise*, and not *faith-wise*.'

'But a man cannot be saved apart from his understanding?'

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'Most certainly not, no more than he can be saved against his will; but the eyes of his understanding must be enlightened, that he may be made willing to receive the gift of salvation in God's way. You see if God had made His salvation dependent upon education or intellect, He would have left the great mass without the chance of salvation until they were tutored up to the requisite point; but as there is *one salvation* for high and low, rich and poor, educated and ignorant, so there is *one method* of receiving it, and of course that must be according to the standard of the most unlearned. Hence the truth of the remark that a friend made to me, "Intellect never helped me to Christ, but it often hindered me."

'I was trying to explain this (which I believe to be of the greatest importance) to some poor people, and I tried to illustrate it in this way. If, in travelling by rail, I had a first-class ticket, I could travel one part of the journey in a first-class carriage, another part in a second, and another in a third, and the railway officials could find no fault; but, if I had only a third-class ticket, I must remain in the third from beginning to end. Thus, in regard to salvation, the educated man can come to the uneducated man's platform; the uneducated cannot rise to his: therefore it is on the common platform on which **ALL** men can stand that God treats concerning salvation.

'This is the great difficulty; this is why not many great, not many wise, and not many noble, can afford to come low enough among the common run of people, to take a guilty sinner's place, receive a

lost sinner's Saviour, and rejoice in a condemned sinner's pardon. This is why Christ taught that men had to become like little children before they could get into the kingdom of heaven.'

'I see the justice of your remarks; but tell me, now, how am I to get into the Kingdom?'

'As you have said before, you know that it is of *grace*—that is to say, God is waiting to give it to you *all for nothing*, without a feeling in payment, without a prayer as the condition of it, just as the widow's friend dealt with her debt. That it might be of *grace*, it was made to be by *faith*, not by *attainment* either in intellect or feeling. This is the impression that has been sometimes left upon my mind, after having heard the gospel stated—that *faith* is the condition which God has demanded from the sinner, in order that he may be saved—that the great Physician will heal the most wretched, sin-burdened soul, but he must receive *faith* as his *fee*. Now this, as you have no doubt found, would be the most difficult of all fees to procure. Feeling is hard to get up, but *faith* is harder. *Faith* is the mere apprehension of *grace*—thankfully accepting what God has already freely given. *Faith* puts God in the chief room as the giver, it being more blessed to give than to receive, and lets him do everything, man being the silent and passive receiver of blessing. *Faith* has to do, not with what I feel toward God, but what God feels toward me, what He has done for me, and what He has told me. *Faith* does not look into its own formation—it looks out to God's provided substitute for the sinner. *Faith* does not

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tell me to *feel* that I am converted, but it fixes me down to the Word of God. Faith tells me to take God at His word. Faith has not to do with what I am thinking of myself, bad or good, but it lets God think for me.

‘Two things are to be distinguished, “salvation” and the “knowledge of salvation.” First, How am I to get saved? and then, How am I to know it?’

‘First, then, my *salvation* depends solely and entirely upon the work, the *person*, of Jesus Christ our Lord. (My salvation is supported by His work; His work is supported by His person.)

‘Secondly, the *knowledge* that I am saved depends solely on the record, the *word*, the testimony of God. “He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record (testimony) that God gave of His Son.” A man is saved on account of Christ having died in his place, the moment that he accepts Christ; he knows that he is saved whenever he believes the record that God gave of His Son.’

‘Well now, tell me shortly what “believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is.” Of course I believe He is able and willing to save anybody, His atonement is sufficient, and His offer free and full; but how is He to become mine?’

‘What is it to believe in a man? What is it to believe in a bank? You do not believe in one who is in the black list—but you can look around and say to yourself, “Well, I believe in so and so,” and it is just the same with Christ: I believe in Him—not

merely in His historical existence—but I trust Him, I receive, I rest upon, Him alone for my salvation.’

‘In a word, then, what should I do? I am wishing to take God’s way, and willing now to do it. When I begin to go through trains of thought, I feel I get confused, and I should just like to know in a sentence what my path ought to be.’

‘*Take the lost sinner’s place, and CLAIM the lost sinner’s Saviour!*’

‘Will the claim be allowed?’

‘Yea, God commands thee to claim Him.’

‘Can I claim Him?’

‘Only a lost sinner can.’

‘I am allowed, urged, besought, commanded to take Jesus as mine; surely I have nothing to lose—yea, Lord I believe Thee, Jesus is mine.’

‘I take comfort from the fact that my sins were laid on Christ—I do not *feel* they were there, but God says it—“He was wounded for *our* transgressions;” not for those of angels—they had none; not for those of *devils*—they can claim no Saviour; but for those who take the *sinner’s* place—“The chastisement of *our* peace was *upon* Him.” Therefore it would be unjust to lay it on me believing in Him. He is a real Saviour for real sinners. My only qualification for such a saviour is that I am such a sinner. And now I believe my sins are not on me—not because I feel them gone, for I do not, but because God says they were laid on Christ.’ (Isaiah liii. 6).

Robert M’Cheyne says, ‘We must not close with Christ because we *feel* Him, but because God

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has said it, and we must take God's word even in the dark. We do not *feel* we have faith. We accept God's way of dealing with sin.

Man would try to settle God's claims. God Himself has settled the claims, and offers the settled account for nothing. Man would try to make his peace with God. God has come and '*made peace,*' Christ Himself becoming '*our peace,*' and now He '*preached peace*' for the acceptance of all, (Eph. ii. 14-17.) Most anxious enquirers seem to think that we have to fight against ourselves in order to be saved, whereas we fight against ourselves because we are saved. We have a race to run but it is not *to* the cross, it is *from* the cross. Man's way is to believe *because we feel*: God's way is to feel *because we believe*, and believe because God has said it. Dr Chalmers says, 'Yet Come the enlargement when it will, it must, I admit, Come after all through the channel of a simple credence given to the *sayings of God*, accounted true and faithful sayings. And never does light and peace so fill my heart as when like a little child, I take up the lesson, that God hath laid on His own Son the iniquities of us all.'

Take the lost sinner's place, and claim the lost sinner's Saviour.

No *works of law* have we to boast—
By nature ruined, guilty, lost,
Condemned already; but Thy hand
Provided what Thou didst demand:
We take the guilty sinner's name,
The guilty sinner's Saviour claim.

No *faith* we bring. 'Tis Christ alone—
'Tis what He is, what He has done.

He is for us as given by God,
 It was for us He shed His blood :
We take the guilty sinner's name,
The guilty sinner's Saviour claim.

We do not *feel* our sins are gone,
 But *know* it from Thy word alone ;
 We know that 'Thou our sins did'st lay
 On Him who has put sin away :
We take the guilty sinner's name,
The guilty sinner's Saviour claim.

Because we *know* our sins forgiven,
 We happy feel: our home is Heaven.
 O help us now as sons, our God,
 To tread the path that Jesus trod :
We take the guilty sinner's name.
The guilty sinner's Saviour claim.



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The Work of the Holy Spirit.

Our Comforter.

WE are not saved *on account* of the Holy Ghost's work in us; we are saved *by means of* it. We are saved on account of Christ's work for us. The more the Spirit works within us the more shall we desire that work to go on; but the work of Christ on Calvary is finished, and this is our resting-place, our peace, our security. We never can (or never ought) here below to get satisfied with the work of the Spirit wrought within us, but we are satisfied with the work of Christ done for us, and this is eternal rest, this is faith. Many sadly confuse these two divine works. Anxious inquirers are constantly looking within to see what is going on there, instead of looking outward to what was done on Calvary. I wish to draw the reader's attention to three most precious operations of the Spirit of God as seen in the beginning of John's Gospel—

First, *Born of the Spirit*; chap. iii. 5-8.

Second, *Indwelt by the Spirit*; chap. iv. 14.

Third, *Communicating the Spirit*; chap. vii. 3

I. BORN OF THE SPIRIT.

Many think that regeneration, or the new birth or quickening, is a process that goes on subsequent to justification. This is a mistake. Regeneration neither goes before nor comes after justification, but is at the same time and is an instantaneous act performed by the Spirit of God, communicating the life of Christ to a man formerly dead in trespasses and sins and having nothing whatever in him that could be transformed into this new creation which He implants. There are two errors against which we must guard:

First, not recognising or acknowledging the Spirit's special work in regeneration; and

Second, confusing or mixing this with Christ's work done for us.

1st, *It is by a special act of absolute grace that we are born again by the Spirit.* 'The wind bloweth where it listeth,' and so the Jewish Pharisee is compelled to allow God to act as a sovereign. What would be the use of Christ coming, living, dying for sin, rising beyond its doom, and His present intercession, unless the Holy Spirit were here applying to individuals that work, that life by the Word. It is not His influence merely, but Himself, who is now on earth. It is not His Word merely, blessed and essential as it is, but Himself, who applies that Word. Look at the feast in Luke xiv. If Christ had not come and died and risen, there would have been no feast to offer, but if the

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Holy Spirit were not here, none would come to the feast. So the parable tells us, 'Compel them to come in;' and the Holy Ghost is the great compeller, making them willing. This is His special work on individuals, not His general work in the world. His work on the world is not in the way of mercy but of conviction.

In John xvi. 8, we read, when He is come He will *reprove* (ἐλεγεῖς, literally, *convict by proof* to its confusion) the world—

(1.) '*Of sin,*' because the great sin of which God holds man to be guilty is the crucifixion of His Son; and the presence of the Holy Ghost is the great proof of man's refusing Christ, for the rejected Christ has sent the Spirit, and His presence is continually crying, 'where is thy brother?' hence it is said, 'of sin, because they believe not on Me.'

(2.) '*Of righteousness.*' If man is an ungrateful sinner, God is a righteous God, and if sinful man gave his Saviour a cross of shame, a righteous God gave His Son a throne of glory. This is the great act of righteousness between God and the man Christ. 'Sit thou at My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Ps. cx. 1. The presence of the Holy Ghost on the earth is the proof of the righteousness of God. Christ having perfectly glorified God, God glorifies Him as a matter of justice, crowns Him with glory and honour; and we see Him, not by the natural eye, for Christ is not yet manifested on His own throne, but in the interval between rejection and triumph, the Father in righteousness has set Him down on His throne, and

sent down the Holy Ghost to testify that He is glorified; therefore it is said, 'of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.'

(3.) '*Of judgment,*' because, since Satan could not hold Christ in death, a power stronger than Satan's must have appeared, whose power over death must therefore have been set aside and himself judged for 'through death He destroyed Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' The Holy Ghost has come to tell us of this great act of judgment; because the very fact that he has come, proves that Christ is risen and is in glory; and the fact that Christ has risen proves that Satan has been judged; and since Satan is 'the prince of this world,' the world has been judged, being set aside in its chosen head; therefore it is said, 'of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

Such is the action of the holy Ghost *on the world* to its confusion and shame: but His work in quickening is quite a distinct thing. He does not work on 'the old man' in me and make it better, and thus gradually save. He shews me that it cannot be mended. He shews me that I am 'guilty,' 'condemned already,' 'lost,' 'alienated,' 'evil only,' 'continually evil,' 'without God,' 'without hope,' 'without strength,' 'dead.'

I have heard men speak of a remaining spark in the bosom of the unregenerate that required merely to be fanned into a flame by the influences of the Holy Ghost. This is unscriptural (read Gen. vi. 5, &c). I have heard such speak of a seed of good in

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every man which the Holy Ghost cultivates, and this they call the new birth. This is utter confusion, and an entire misconception of the figure. Man's co-operation in regeneration is not required, because he has no power to co-operate. He is dead. 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' The work is altogether of God. As it was God who in His own heart before the foundation of the world, planned redemption, and as it was God in His Son who, eighteen hundred years ago, before we were born, secured our redemption, so it is God by His Spirit who now, without our endeavour, apart from our effort, applies this redemption. In fact, the first thing God does is *to make us willing*. How entirely is this work of God! He was alone in eternity; He was alone in creation; He was alone in redemption; He is alone in regeneration which is merely redemption applied. God does not *find* us children; He *makes* us children. But we must look now at another error.

2d. *Confounding the work of the Spirit in us with Christ's work for us.* While the Spirit of God is the sole agent, the truth of God is the sole instrument which He employs. We cannot see the Spirit; we can see the Word. We cannot see His operations: we can read His record about Christ. No doubt it will be merely letters without meaning, until He opens the eyes; but He works only in His appointed channel. He never tells us to look *inward* even to His own operations, for peace, but *outward to Christ*. That is the most Spirit-honouring preaching of the gospel in which you hear most of Christ. Once I

heard a very earnest man preaching to anxious inquirers, and he was dwelling continuously and exclusively upon the Spirit's work—its signs and characteristics—with the effect of confusing many of his hearers. For who could obtain scriptural peace with God from what he felt? We get a healthful and heaven-born conflict by marking the Holy Ghost's operations within us, but never peace. This we get by gazing at the Lamb of God on Calvary. I thought as I heard the preacher, 'I wonder if the Holy Ghost would preach in that way if He were standing there,' and I immediately remembered, that 'He shall not speak of (from) Himself,' 'He shall testify of Me;' that is, He will preach Christ. 'He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you.' 'He shall glorify Me.' This is spiritual preaching, because the preaching of the things of the Spirit, and as He Himself preaches. I believe the more we are depending on the Spirit's working, the more we shall preach what the Spirit wishes us to preach about, and look to Him to apply it. When we begin to point the anxious enquirer to the Spirit's work, this is not how the Spirit Himself would deal with him.

If I began to speak to a working man sitting down to his dinner, and said to him, 'Do you know the muscles employed in mastication?'

'What's that?' he would likely say.

'Well, in eating?'

'Indeed, I do not?'

'And you do not know the nerves that supply them?'

'I'm sure I do not.'

'And the beautiful mechanism and arrangement by which the food is converted into a bolus, and introduced into the stomach?'

'Now you are surely laughing at me.'

'Oh no, I'm not, but all that is most true and interesting; but tell me what do you know?'

'Well, sir, I know that I am hungry, and that this is a good dinner.'

'This would be the common-sense and appropriate answer. Even the physiologist, when he is hungry, does not think much of *how* he eats. The two great points are, that he is hungry, and that he has a good dinner. Some are hungry and have not the good food, others have the food and are not hungry. But the qualification for enjoying food is not a knowledge of how to eat, but the being hungry. We do not need to know *how* we are born again in order to be saved. We do not need to know all or anything about the Spirit's work within us in order to get peace (there were people, in Acts xix. 2, who were believers and who yet said, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost'), but we must know about Christ's work *for* us before we can be saved. The greatest physiologist might die of hunger. We might know everything about the Spirit's work and yet be lost for ever, because we had not received and rested upon Christ offered to us in the gospel.

We are justified by *faith*, but the experience of what goes on within me is sensation and not *faith*.

Some men seem to have a difficulty with *anxious*

souls (believing them to be dead), to know what to advise them to do. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. Some, therefore, tell sinners at once to pray for the Spirit, thinking thus to simplify matters by reducing it to common-sense—as it seems very plain, since the Spirit quickens, nothing is easier than to cry for that Spirit. But it is not so easy, for a dead man cannot cry. Some, again, tell them to believe the record God gave of His Son—to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. A dead man cannot speak, and of course a dead man cannot believe, so we are in an equal difficulty. Praying and believing are alike impossible with the unregenerate man, without the quickening of the Spirit of God. The great point is to find out what we are commanded to do, what our duty to do. It is to tell every man the good news, and press him instantly to believe it. It is the Spirit that is the agent, but He always uses the truth as the instrument, the truth about a crucified and now risen Christ. Faith does not come by feeling, trying, nor praying, but by *bearing*. The moment I accept Christ as my own individual, personal Saviour who put away my sin, I am warranted to believe that I am born again, and the Spirit in the new man will lust against the flesh in the old man. Peace, indeed, I have with God, that is Christ, but no peace with myself. There is a faith that is human, and a faith that is Spirit-wrought. The plan is of God; the redemption, the truth, and the faith are all of God. But how can I know whether I have God-wrought faith? Does my faith take hold of what is going on within? That is not

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of God. Does my faith take hold of, is it taken up with, what was done eighteen hundred years ago on Calvary, and with Him who suffered there? This is God-honouring and saving faith. This is being born of the Spirit. The Spirit introduces by the truth, Christ as the life into my dead soul. This is quickening, *the renewing* of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost thus gives a *new* nature.

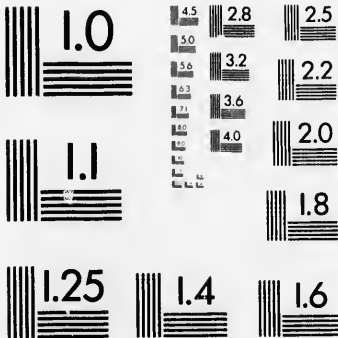
II. INDWELT BY THE SPIRIT.

In John iv. 14 we read of the indwelling of the Spirit 'as a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' This is said only of Christians. The Spirit of God dwells in none but in those whom He has quickened. And He *dwells* in all whom He has quickened (Rom. viii. 9). In some in greater measure than in others; but 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.' Therefore, all who are Christ's have the Spirit dwelling in them. There is a danger here in *separating* Christ and the Spirit in us, as there is in regeneration of *confounding* Christ's work for me with the Spirit's work in me. It is as linked with Christ, a son as Christ is a son, an heir as Christ is, that the Spirit dwells in the believer, even as He dwelt in Christ, of course in Him without measure. It is thus we have *access*, for through Christ we have access by one Spirit to the Father. It is thus that we can *worship* the Father in spirit and in truth. This lesson he taught the poor confessed sinner at Sychar's well. It is thus that we are practically *sanctified*, more and more separated



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from evil, for He is the 'Holy' Ghost, the 'Spirit of holiness.' It is thus we are *comforted and guided*; for Jesus said, If I go away I will send the Comforter, (literally *paraclete*, which includes much more than comfort). This same word is used in 1 John ii. 1, for Christ the advocate (literally *paraclete*), one who looks after all our interests. And thus, as Christ looks after all our interests before God, so the other *paraclete* looks after all our interests as we are passing through the wilderness, the divine Servant leading us into all truth; for here again the truth is His channel.

Thus we *live* in the Spirit (all Christians being dead and risen with Christ); and the exhortation is founded on this, 'Let us also *walk* in the Spirit' (Gal. v. 25), principally as being connected with Christ and the members of His body, in every member of which the Spirit dwells. We are to walk in the Spirit, in the practical exercise of brotherly love, and not be *walking as men*. What! are we not *men*? No; we are sons of God indwelt by the Spirit. Men walk in selfishness. The walk in the Spirit is each esteeming another better than himself.

Thus we are '*led* of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 18). All Christians are led. This is not an exhortation, but a privilege, 'For as *many* as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God,' and all believers are sons. But though in each Christian the Spirit dwells, the exhortation is given, 'Be filled with the Spirit' as with the air you breathe, so live in the presence of glory, in the light, in fellowship with

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Father and Son, and thus the atmosphere will be 'the Spirit.' He is spoken of as

1. *A witness.* (1 John v. 6.) He bears true witness, He tells the truth concerning Christ, He is a witness to Jesus Christ having come by water and blood; and every Christian has Him dwelling within him, as we see also in Rom. viii., a witness that we are sons. He is the witness of love and accomplished redemption.

2. *A Seal.* As the goods are stamped by the purchaser after they are his own, so after we believe, we are sealed. Only sons are sealed. The oil was put on the blood of the trespass offering. (Lev. xiv. 25, 28). In the experience of many these go together; but many, especially in Apostolic days, though they knew their sins were forgiven, did not know they had eternal life. A quickened soul is not necessarily an emancipated soul.

3. *An earnest.* He is the earnest of our inheritance—that is, part of it that we possess now. The Israelites got the grapes from Eshcol while still in the desert. In Rom. viii. 17, we are children (the Spirit bearing witness), and as such sealed; 'but, if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.' Therefore, since He, as heir, has not taken the inheritance, we do not have it, but suffer now, having the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. 'Ourselves also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body' (Rom viii. 23).

III. COMMUNICATING THE SPIRIT.

In John vii. 38. we read, 'He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' Thus those who have been quickened, and who are indwelt by the Spirit, are now the channels through which He is ministered to others. The waters once flowed from a smitten rock. The water flowed from Christ's wounded side, and it is only as we are smitten, exercised, subdued, that these rivers will flow from us. Only as we come thus to Christ and drink, shall living waters flow from us. Alas! how little of the Spirit *w* flowing from those professing to be quickened by the Spirit. Is it not because we are drawing little from the great fountain-head? 'Let him come unto Me and drink.' It is truly through saved sinners that God is now to send forth His river of life. 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.' And this love of God we are to pour out in rivers in this arid desert as witnesses of God; first, by carrying the gospel to our fellow-sinners, and telling of that Christ whom we know, and who is offered to them; and, second, by ministering love to all the saints of God in building up and comforting them. And it is only as our own affections and thoughts, that is, all our inner man, is filled with the pure water from the fountain, that the rivers can flow.

In connection with the three operations of the Spirit of God which we have been considering, namely, *quickened, indwelt, and communicating*, we

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may look—1st. At Christ himself; 2d. At the Church corporately; 3d. At each individual believer—

1st. As quickened by the Spirit.

Christ was born of the Spirit. This was His incarnation as we read in the angel's answer to Mary in Luke i. 35. 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' (Luke i. 35). The meat-offering had to be mingled with oil. (Lev. ii. 4.)

The Church corporately in the resurrection of Christ (Rom. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 3). He was quickened by the Spirit, as the head of the body (1 Pet. iii. 18).

The *individual* believer; when the Spirit applies the truth to his conscience (James i. 18). 'Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.'

2d. Indwelt by the Spirit.

Christ we see sealed with the Spirit when, at His baptism, the Spirit, as a dove, rested on Him. The meat-offering had to be anointed with oil. (Lev. ii. 4.) 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' (John vi. 27).

The Church, we see at Pentecost, not merely quickened, but formed into a temple for God on the earth: the true temple, filled with the true glory. And we see this accomplished in fulfilment of Acts i. 8. 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, (1) both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, (2.) and in Samaria, (3.) and unto the uttermost part of the earth.' The Holy Ghost thus fell on,

1. The Jews, when they were *waiting in prayer*

(Acts ii. 4.) in obedience to Jesus' resurrection command, 'wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard of me.' (Acts i. 4). They had heard of Him in John xiv. to xvi.

2. In Samaria, by the *laying on of the apostles' hands* (Acts viii. 17).

3. The Gentiles, in the *preaching of the Word* (Acts x. 44). And thus is the Spirit now given. In this latter method was the proper Gentile pentecost our pentecost. Thus it is in the preaching of the Word that we are to expect the blessing of the Spirit.

The individual, is seen in his sealing: when by believing the record of the witness he receives his emancipation, his conscious liberty and peace with God, taking his place as a son, with the Holy Ghost as the testifier, and waiting with Him as the earnest of the inheritance.

3d. Communicating the Spirit.

Christ in His ministry and prophetic work communicated the Spirit.

The Church is seen communicating the Spirit, in the preaching of the apostles, at and subsequent to, Pentecost, in the Scriptures they have left, and all collective testimony from their day to this, that has been in accordance with the Word of God.

Individuals, in the outflow of love in our place, in the wilderness, as evangelists, teachers, pastors, or in any service to God.

[Each of these words, BORN, INDWELT, and COMMUNICATING, has its opposite severally in the three words spoken about the Spirit, RESIST, GRIEVE, and QUENCH.]

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I. The Spirit may be *resisted*.

Acts vii. 51: 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.' This is addressed to the unconverted who resist Him as a *quickener*.

II. The Spirit may be *grieved*.

Eph. iv. 30: 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. This is addressed only to saved people, who can grieve Him as an *indwelling* Spirit. This shews what a friend He is to us. If you had committed some great sin, your mother would be grieved, your enemy would be rejoiced. You can grieve only a friend. What a touching appeal, fellow-believer! What will the consequence be? In love He will reprove. He will rebuke our consciences, until we are consciously cleansed, and He can again dwell in us ungrieved.

III. The Spirit may be *quenched*.

1 Thess. v. 19: 'Quench not the Spirit.' Many have been perplexed with this text, thinking that it had reference to the *indwelling* of the Spirit. You may grieve Him thus, but no believer can quench Him thus; 'For they shall never perish;' but the next verse, 'Despise not prophesyings,' explains it. A Christian cannot quench the Spirit in himself, but by refusing to allow Him to work from a fellow-Christian, he thus may quench Him. It is thus the Spirit in His communications who may be quenched.

As He can be resisted in His testimony which is His instrument in *quicken*ing, and grieved in His

person as *indwelling*, so he can be quenched in His gifts as *communicating* life. If I despise the humblest channel that God has formed and filled to dispense His streams of life, and put a sluice upon their flow, I stop His testimony, I quench the Spirit. It has nothing whatever to do with the indwelling of the Spirit. That can never be quenched; for the foundation of God standeth sure. But what a solemn warning in this day of self-seeking and pretensions! *Resist* is the word applied to the unconverted. *Grieve* is that applied to the individual Christian. *Quench* is that which has reference to the saints when gathered together, waiting on the Spirit.

The sin against the Holy Ghost has often been spoken about. All sin is against the Holy Ghost. What Christ spoke about in such solemn and awful words in Matt, xii., was '*blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,*' and if the context is looked at it will be seen that this blasphemy consisted in giving Satan the credit of doing what was known to be God's work.

Bring your ignorance to the Holy Spirit, the great teacher, who by his precious truth will lead you into all truth.

No, not the love without the blood;
That were to me no love at all;
It could not reach my sinful soul,
Nor hush the fears which me appal.

I need the love, I need the blood,
I need the grace, the cross, the grave,
I need the resurrection-power,
A soul like mine to purge and save.

The love I need is righteous love,
 Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree,
 Love that exacts the sinner's debt,
 Yet, in exacting, sets him free.

Love that condemns the sinner's sin,
 Yet, in condemning, pardon seals;
 That saves from righteous wrath, and yet,
 In saving, righteousness reveals.

Love boundless as Jehovah's self,
 Love holy as His righteous law,
 Love unsolicited, unbought,
 The love proclaimed on Golgotha.

This is the love that calms my heart,
 That soothes each conscience-pang within,
 That pacifies my guilty dread,
 And frees me from the power of sin.

The love that blotteth out each stain,
 That plucketh hence each deadly sting,
 That fills me with the peace of God,
 Unseals my lips and bids me sing.

The love that liberates and saves,
 That this poor straitened soul expands,
 That lifts me to the heaven of heavens,
 The shrine above not made with hands.

The love that quickens into zeal,
 That makes me self-denied and true,
 That leads me out of what is old,
 And brings me into what is new.


That purifies and cheers and calms,
 That knows no change and no decay;
 The love that loves for evermore,
 Celestial sunshine, endless day.



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 **S**ORROWFUL, YET ALWAYS REJOICING'—Such was Paul's experience (2 Cor. vi. 10). The saved man is a great mystery to the unsaved; happy yet sad; triumphing, yet troubled; having no sin on him, and yet having sin in him; having no condemnation, and still having fearful conflict. Saved now, yet working out his salvation, and waiting for salvation. Even among saved men themselves there is great misunderstanding. Some are engaged more with the triumph side, others with the conflict side of a Christian's experience. We find both most fully brought out in Scripture, each having its own place and importance. The Christian's conflict takes rise and character from his triumph. We get much instruction by looking at the illustrations of a believer's triumph, walk, and conflict, as contained in the figures of the Old Testament; for we know that 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope' (Rom. xv. 4). Let us look at Israel's history. We find the Israelites

1. Sheltered by blood from God's hand in judg-

ment in Egypt and testifying for God in the midst of godlessness.

2. Redeemed by power. Taken through: the Red Sea by the power of God's might and living by faith in the wilderness.

3. Entered into their possessions and in Canaan fighting the battles of the Lord. Let us look at these in detail.

U.—SHELTERED BY BLOOD.

THE ISRAELITE IN EGYPT.

The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb. . . . Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. . . . And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment, I am Jehovah, and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are, and *when I see the blood I will pass over you*, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.' (Exodus xii.) In Egypt the Israelite had thus a triumph and had also a conflict.

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'TRIUMPH AND CONFLICT'

1. *Triumph.*—He rejoiced because he trusted to the blood on the lintel, and to the word of his Jehovah God, who had said, 'when I see the blood I will pass over you.' So the Christian in this world rejoices, not in the thought that he is pure and sinless, but in the fact that Christ died for his sins. We see this fully explained in the Epistle to the Romans (iii. 21 to v. 11.)

God could pass over because the blood was on the lintel.

The Israelite could rejoice because he believed God.

Thus God can now justify the ungodly.

'When I see the blood I will pass over you' (Exod. xii. 13). 'Being now justified by His blood' (Rom. v. 9).

The believer can rejoice being at peace with God.

'The blood shall be to you for a token' (Exod. xii. 13). 'Being justified by faith we have peace with God' (Rom. v. 1.)

Sheltered by blood, we feast upon the roasted Lamb, with bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and in the pilgrim garb—at perfect peace, for 'it is Christ that died.'

Heirs of salvation,
Chosen of God;
Past condemnation,
Sheltered by blood.

Even in Egypt feed we on the Lamb,
Keeping the statutes of God the I AM.
In the world around 'tis night
Where the feast is spread 'tis bright,
Israel's Lord is Israel's light.

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, our Saviour from above
'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we love

2. *Conflict*.—There would have been an *unscriptural conflict* in Egypt, if an Israelite had tried by any and every means to put off the hand that was crying for blood, except by God's own ordained means, the blood on the lintel; the acceptance of God's estimate of the value of the blood that He himself had appointed. This unscriptural conflict we find in modern times, in man's efforts by prayers and religiousness, and penances, and sorrows, to live a good *life*, when God is demanding the *death* of the sinner for his sins. And how often do we see the sad spectacle of a man in a condemned world trying to get up religion or devotion, or anything else to meet the wrath of God against his sins, when he is condemned already! This is the state of man as depicted in Rom. i. 18, to iii. 20.

But there is a *scriptural conflict*—namely, the conflict against

THE WORLD.

The Christian presents a strange anomaly that cannot be seen perfectly in the figure of an Israelite sheltered by blood in Egypt. He has been taken entirely out of Egypt, and yet he is sent back to Egypt, as Jesus said to His Father in John xvii. 18, concerning His followers, 'As thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.' According to the illustration, every Christian in one aspect, and a very practical aspect, is still in Egypt, that is the world 'which spiritually is called Egypt where also our Lord was crucified:'

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'TRIUMPH AND CONFLICT.'

(Rev. xi. 8). So Jesus prayed:—'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' (John xvii. 15). Being thus in the world and not of it, with souls saved, but with bodies still liable to disease and death, and all creation under the curse, 'We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life,' (2 Cor. v. 4). And 'we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.' (Rom. viii. 23). These are groans which should not be stifled, but encouraged. The more that we are in harmony with the mind of God the more will these groanings be heard; not the groaning of an anxious soul to get peace, which God has already provided and presented, but the groanings of the saint who is waiting for his body to be fashioned like unto Christ's body of glory. This is evidently quite different from fighting against indwelling corruption. We are like the Israelites waiting till all the chosen of the Lord shall have actually had the blood on the lintel, which will be completed only when the Lord comes. We have been sent into this world to persuade men to come under the protecting power of the blood of Jesus, and thus be sheltered from wrath. Meanwhile our place is described in the 17th chapter of John where we find that the Christian is

Given to Christ out of the world (ver. 6).

Left in the world (vers. 11 and 15).

Not of the world (ver. 14).

Hated by the world (ver. 14).

Kept from the evil of the world (ver. 15).

Sent into the world (ver. 18.)

Preaching the word to the world (ver. 20).

'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world' Gal. vi. 14.

II.—REDEEMED BY POWER.

THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS.

1. *Triumph.*—A quickened soul is first exercised about what *he has done*,—that he has sinned; and then, as we have seen, he gets peace, because forgiven through the blood of Christ who died for him. But he very soon finds out a further distress, not arising from what he has done, but from what *he is*—*a sinner*. This is described in Rom. v. 12, 'As by one man sin entered into the world.' He has been sheltered from God's hand in judgment, but he finds he requires a new life in which to serve God. The Israelites found themselves after having been delivered from the death of their first-born, with *rocks* at either side, *foes* behind, and *the sea* before. So the Christian was *born* a sinner; his own sinful *nature* is unchanged and unchangeable; and the *law* of God is against him—three obstacles much more

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• TRIUMPH AND CONFLICT •

terrible than those of the Israelites. Many a quickened soul in such a case is ready to cry, 'Hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?' (Exod. xiv. 11) 'Who shall deliver me?' (Rom. vii. 24.)

But God does not say, 'I have taken you away to die,' but He says, "*go forward*," (Exod. xiv. 15.) God is for us, and His power is exercised through death, through the territory, the last domain of law. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. A way is made in the sea. 'The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians: and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.' (Exod. xiv. 30). This deliverance points not so much to Christ dying, as to Christ 'raised again for our justification;' not to justification by blood, but 'to justification of life,' Rom. v. 18 (in Christ as risen from the dead): 'For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by *the death* of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by *His life*' that is His life in resurrection. Not only are we out of the *house* of bondage, but we are out of the *land* of Egypt. Every Christian has a right to say—'Not only has God sheltered me by blood, but He has saved my soul by His power; not only have I peace with God, but God is for me; not only has God's hand been stayed from visiting me for my sins in wrath, but God's hand has been manifested in destroying all my enemies; not only am I not condemned, but there is no condemnation; not only did Christ die for me, but my standing is in Christ risen from the dead.' (Rom. viii

1). 'It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again.' Rom. viii. 34.

Pilgrims and strangers,
Captives no more;
Wilderness rangers,
Sing we on shore.

God in His power parted hath the sea,
Foes all have perished, His people are free.

By the pillar safely led,
By the manna daily fed,

Now the homeward way we tread.

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, our Shepherd here below:

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we know.

2. *Conflict*.—There is an *unscriptural Conflict* here also:—How am I as a sinner in the world, under law, to get out of my old standing in Adam and to get into the wilderness with God?

If the Israelites had tried to scale the rocky precipices on either hand, the barriers of nature, instead of taking God's way by a new and supernatural path altogether, this would have been an illustration of a quickened sinner trying to climb this mighty obstacle 'born in sin,' this mountain of his nature, instead of taking God's way out of it, as seen in Romans v. 19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

If the Israelites had turned on the foes behind, and had tried to fight their way through, instead of standing still to see the salvation of God, this would have been an illustration of a quickened sinner trying to fight against and extirpate his evil nature, or make it better, and thus try to get de-

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livered from the wages of sin, instead of taking God's way in Romans vi. 23, 'eternal life through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.'

If a quickened sinner were attempting to get deliverance from the power of the law of God and its righteous demands, by trying to make that which cannot be subject to the law of God a willing servant, he should be as the Egyptians, trying to get through where faith alone could walk, 'which the Egyptians assaying to do were *drowned*.' That is the doom of man's efforts; but in Christ Jesus we have died, we have risen. RECKON therefore yourself dead indeed unto sin. It is not that we feel dead to it, or are dead to its motions; but as Christ died to it, so we reckon ourselves dead. Instead of crying therefore when I find such a holy law inoperative in bringing my God-hating nature into subjection, 'Who shall deliver me?' (Romans vii. 24) and stopping there, I look back on all my foes dead on the shore. Christ's grave is empty now, and God looks at me as in Christ Jesus, and every question of sins and sin is settled for ever. Christ, my sins, and myself, were all nailed to Calvary's cross. I believe this fact, that Christ is risen. I accept God's meaning which He has attached to this fact, that I am now not in my sins. I can now sing, in spirit, the triumph song of Moses on the wilderness shore of the Red Sea, and truly say, in the language of Romans viii., 'There is therefore now no condemnation to me in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

‘GRACE AND TRUTH.’

But also a *scriptural conflict* now begins—namely, the conflict against

THE FLESH.

This is not a conflict to obtain peace ; not a conflict to get deliverance from condemnation, not even that sympathetic and God-honouring groaning of Romans viii. 18-28, but conflict against myself. It is not the conflict against the world. If we look at Israel as the illustration, we find that there were no Egyptians in the wilderness, only Jehovah's congregation is there. We are now shut in with God : God's enemies are our enemies ; we are on His side, even against ourselves. We have been crucified and raised ; we have sung the song of victory ; we triumph in Christ Jesus, and now we have conflict in earnest with our own evil natures. The man who realises that he has got once and for ever into the standing described in Rom. viii. 1, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' with all his triumph, realises tremendous deadly conflict, not around him, but within him, not struggling to get acceptance with God, but keeping his body under, looking at his own unchanged and unchangeably evil nature within him with something of the abhorrence of God—every day confessing his sin, every day requiring the Advocate. After the Israelites had sung the triumph song on the wilderness shore of the Red Sea, after they had received the pillar cloud to guide them, bread from heaven to feed them, and the water from the rock to refresh

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them, '*then came Amalek* and fought with Israel in Rephidim.' Does this not give us an illustration of the lusting between the flesh and the Spirit as seen in Galatians v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other?' This 'lusting' or warfare goes on, not that we may cry, 'O wretched man, who shall deliver,' but 'that ye may not do the things that ye would' (*lit.*). This is a tremendous personal reality in every saved man. At the same moment that he is rejoicing in Christ Jesus, he has no confidence in the flesh which is still actually within him, and thus he has a warfare every day against himself.

Read Exodus xvii. 8-16, where we get the account of the conflict: Joshua, the captain of the Lord, fights with Amalek, (son of Eliphaz, eldest son of Esau); Moses is on the hill-top with the rod, holding up his hands in intercession to God, supported by Aaron and Hur, one holding up each arm, for as long as his arms were held up Israel prevailed. And Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword. An altar is raised, called Jehovah my banner, for the Lord will have war with Amalek, not once for all, but *from generation to generation*. This is all after the Red Sea has been crossed.

This gives us an illustration of how the Spirit of Jesus fights against the flesh. The Advocate is with the Father on high, and He is Jesus Christ the righteous, the spotless High Priest, making continual intercession for us. The Spirit

overcomes the flesh by the Word of God. This is all after we have joyfully sung the victory-anthem recorded in Romans viii. ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ And indeed we have a specimen of the mighty sword we are now to wield by the Spirit in us in the practical exhortations laid down in the last chapters of the epistle to the Romans, commencing with chapter xii.

As the Israelites found that the sword of Joshua and the prayers of Moses routed the heathen Amalek, so the Christian finds that there is nothing like the truth of God, the authority of God, the sword of the Spirit, accompanied by the intercession of Jesus on high for the unsubject flesh within him. All the wilderness conflict has this character: ‘Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to *humble* thee and *prove* thee, to *know* what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst *keep* His commandments or not.’ (Deut. viii. 2.)

Beloved brethren, ‘seeing then that ye are risen with Christ, mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.’

We have triumph because we are forgiven. We have conflict because we sin.

We have triumph for we are saved. We have conflict because we are sinners although saved.

We have triumph over our Adam-nature, for we are not in Adam, but in Christ. We have conflict within us, for, alas! we often ‘walk as men.’

We ‘are not in the flesh,’ therefore we have

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TRIUMPH AND CONFLICT.

triumph. The flesh is in us, therefore we have conflict.

We are 'not under law,' therefore we have triumph. Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' therefore we have conflict. We are not (*ὑπο νόμον*) *under law*, neither are we (*ἀνόμοι*) *lawless*, but we are (*ἐνόμοι*) *inlawed*—that is *under authority*, or duly subject to Christ.

Christ has taken charge, not only of our salvation, but of our conflict and our walk. Grace saves, but grace also teaches. Neither is it by an internal power only that we are guided, but by external authority or commandment. We do not walk in the paths of righteousness, merely because *we see* them to be righteous, but because God has *ordered* them. The former would be self-pleasing, the latter is God-pleasing, and if ever the question should arise between what I feel and see to be right and what God says is right, then I must obey God rather than my own feelings. Abraham did not understand how it was right to sacrifice his son, but he believed God, and offered his son because God told him.

As long as the Israelites were in the wilderness, they were seen in themselves, as needy and sinful, while God was proving himself bountiful and gracious. We find a wonderful illustration of God's provision for the Christian's need very near the end of the Israelites' march. In Numbers xxi. we have a sad picture of their murmurings, and at verse 6, we read 'The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people

came to Moses, and said, we have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.'

As long as the Christian is in this world, he will have sin in him, and his power against it is Jesus crucified. The Son of Man lifted up on the cross is what withers up practically and daily our rebellion, waywardness and perversity, and in Him God sees no iniquity in Jacob and no perverseness in Israel. And if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

III.—SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS.

THE ISRAELITES IN CANAAN.

1. *Triumph.*—Israel under Joshua got through the Jordan, as Israel under Moses got through the Red Sea. All Canaan was theirs, 'From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.' (Joshua i. 4.) This was the land

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flowing with milk and honey; the land in which they were to have long life and prosperity; the land wherein they were to dwell and be fed. The Israelites were blessed with all temporal blessings in earthly places in Canaan. Of us, as Christians, now it is said: God *'bath* blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' Certainly, we have many blessings which we never think of, and never have thought of, but we can think of none which we do not have in Christ. Every Christian has Christ—nothing less. He may not know all: who does? We strive that we may know Him, that we may grow in grace, and in 'the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.' In Christ every Christian is blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

He is quickened, raised, seated already in heavenly places in Christ. Therefore, according to the illustration, he is in Canaan as to his triumph; for as Christ is, so are we in this world. He is dead, risen, seated, so are we in Him. (Eph. i., ii., iii.)

Canaan possessors,
Safe in the land,
Victors, confessors;
Banner in hand.

Jordan's deep river evermore behind,
Cares of the desert no longer in mind,
Egypt's stigma rolled away,
Canaan's corn our strength and stay,
Triumph we the live-long day.

'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, the Christ of God alone;
'Tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus, 'tis Jesus whom we own.

3. *Conflict.*—There is an *unscriptural conflict* here,

'GRACE AND TRUTH.'

as we have seen in Egypt and the wilderness. This conflict is said to be (Ephesians vi. 12) 'Not against flesh and blood.' There is more in this simple statement than might at first appear. We are in the world; we are not of it. Our work is not to fight to put the world right. This is the mistake of all who have taken, or may take, the sword to fight the Lord's battles in this dispensation. We are here to act in grace as children of the Father, and to save men from the world. Our enemies are spiritual, not men in the flesh. We are not sanctified Jews, praying the 109th Psalm, and slaying men, women, and children. That was the right thing in Canaan; it is the wrong thing in the places in which we stand, not only as far as bloodshed, but the principle goes down to every wrestling with the weapons of this world. Have I been cheated? what is my remedy? Go to law? Nay. But then I shall suffer loss. Very well, suffer (1 Cor. vi. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 20). The believer is done with all 'flesh and blood' conflict. He may be called a fool, a madman—~~one~~ but has no interest as a citizen, as a politician, a person of utopian ideas and transcendental schemes. He is content to be styled, and moreover is not to retort. His life is hid with Christ in God. All contact with the world's ways can but defile him. 'Flesh and blood' is not the platform on which he wars. World philanthropists he may admire; world reformers he may be thankful for; but he hears his Master say, 'Let the dead bury their dead' (if decently buried, so much the more agreeable for us), 'follow thou

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me.' But there is a *scriptural conflict*, namely, the conflict against

THE DEVIL.

All Canaan was given to Joshua; but we read that they had to enter in and take possession of it personally—'every place that the *sole of your foot shall tread upon*, that have I given unto you' (Joshua i. 3). They had to fight for every inch of the land. First Jericho fell, then Ai, until Joshua routed his thirty-one kings. Read Joshua xii. And after we are told that we are already raised and seated in Christ, that we already have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, the conflict is put before us in the very heavenly places where we are blessed, as Joshua's fighting with Canaan's kings was in Canaan.

This conflict is not against the world nor the flesh—we have considered these already—but it is against Satan the accuser, wicked spirits ruling the darkness, demons that hate the light (Eph. vi. 12).

1st. What are they? 'Principalities and powers.' They possess strength of evil, strong wills, more powerful than ours. They originally derived strength from God, and their apostate will rises from themselves.

2d. What do they do? They have *power* over the world as governing it; for it is in darkness, and they are 'the rulers of the darkness of this world.'

3d. Where do they dwell? They *dwell* 'in heavenly places,' and thus ever endeavour to obtain a religious and delusive ascendancy over us, for they

are 'spiritual wickednesses.' And what do we require for these foes who dispute our possessions? This is not Pharaoh keeping us in bondage; not Amalek fighting with us, but the Canaanites disputing our own possessions. The former two we were saved from; the latter we have to meet in their true attitude, as keeping us from our rightful place as the redeemed of God. We fight, clad in the armour of God. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of *the devil*. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints' (Eph. vi. 10-18). This is neither to 'get peace,' nor to avoid condemnation, nor to get into 'heavenly places.' It is not with the judgment of God, nor the law of God, nor sin within me. This conflict is against

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the wiles of the adversary, who, day and night, tries to deprive me of all that God has given, and all that faith enjoys.

Let us see how all this bears upon us. Some look upon a Christian as out of Egypt, now in the Wilderness, and waiting to reach Canaan. This may have some truth in it, but it does not convey the whole truth as to our position.

Others look upon it thus:—We are in Canaan by faith: we are in the Wilderness in fact; and we may be in Egypt, Wilderness, or Canaan as to experience. Again, there is truth here, but I do not think it is exactly put as subsequent Scripture warrants. Let us shortly sum up all the above:—

HEB. xi. 28-30.

I.—‘Through faith he (Moses) kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.’

Exod. xii.—Rom. v. 1-11. Triumph by blood.

John xvii.—Rom. viii. 22-28. Conflict with the WORLD.

II.—‘By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.’

Exod. xiv. 15; xv.—Rom. viii. Triumph in power.

Exod. xvii. 8-16—Gal. v. 17. Conflict with the FLESH.

III.—‘By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.’

Josh. i.—Eph. i.—Triumph in our inheritance.

Josh. xii.—Eph. v.—Conflict with the DEVIL.

‘All these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition’ (1 Cor. x. 11). By *faith*, therefore, according to the above parallel, we are *in Christ*, who is far above all

'GRACE AND TRUTH.'

Egyptian judgment, all Wilderness weariness, or even all Canaan conflicts. In actual *fact* we are still in the world; and in individual *experience* we have still clouds and sunshine, joy and sorrow, storm and calm. Thus there are three things the Christian has to distinguish: 1st, his Standing; 2nd, his State; 3rd, his Experience,—His standing before God, his state in this world, and his own experience as he passes through this world.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING.

All Christians are by faith in the eternal calm of God, having everything that the work of Christ has secured. We are far above all principalities and powers in Him who is alive for evermore, who is the Living One, and was once dead. We are as near to God as Christ is, for we are made nigh by His blood; and we are as dear to God as Christ is, for Jesus, speaking to His Father, says, 'Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me' (John xvii. 23). In Him we possess all the fulness of God. But as to fact, we find another side of the truth, which is—

2. THE CHRISTIAN'S STATE.

According as we look at it, all Christians are still in *Egypt*. Not an enemy is really destroyed. The *world* is around us and against us. We are sheltered by blood, and still we are in a condemned world. We are eternally justified, and by grace we are saved persons; still, in plain English, in

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Scripture language, we are just where we were as to our surroundings.

Again we are, as to fact, still in the *Wilderness*, requiring guidance by the eye of our Father every day. As the Israelites of old had no sign-posts nor highways in the trackless desert, and were guided by the pillar-cloud, so human wisdom and human advice can never direct the Christian in his heavenward journey. God's word is His light. As the Israelites had to get their bread daily from heaven, marching through a barren wilderness, so the Christian gets no food for his new nature in that which his fellow-men all around him enjoy. He says, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20). Every day the Israelites required the water from the Rock in the dry and parched land, so the Christian daily drinks the truth of God. Christ is his daily refreshment. These are for our *weariness*. The Israelites likewise had Joshua to fight, and Moses to pray, against their foe Amalek; so we have the Spirit to war against the flesh, and our advocate with the Father. Jesus presents the blood for us on high, and daily we require our feet to be washed from all earthly defilement. These are God's provisions for our *sin*.

Again, as to fact, we are in the *Canaan* conflict, following our Joshua through all his wars, which are our wars. Every Christian is really, as to fact, in Egypt, in the Wilderness, and in Canaan, at one and the same time. Different aspects may be more

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prominently ours at one time than at another, and this constitutes experience. The experience of Christians is not always Christian experience.

3. THE CHRISTIAN'S EXPERIENCE.

What do we find the every-day experience of Christians to be? According as a Christian understands what his standing is and what his state is, so will be his experience. But every Christian's experience must be 'a walking with God.' He may be, as to experience, sheltered by blood, and hardly knowing it, like an Israelite in Egypt not realizing the safety that there was under the blood-sprinkled lintel. He may be consciously at peace with God by the blood, but still trembling under the fear of coming into condemnation, like an Israelite not seeing the path through the sea, and trembling lest Pharaoh's host destroy him; but he will be walking with God up to the light that he has. He may be rejoicing on the solid ground of Christ risen, having for ever done with all against him, and having God now for him consciously, and he thus walks with God, like an Israelite passed through the Red Sea, and entered upon the wilderness journey. And, finally, he may be walking as in heavenly places, like an Israelite through the Jordan and settled in Canaan. He is God's workmanship, and is now getting into the mystery of His will (Eph. i. 9), having lost sight of the thought of his own salvation, and being absorbed in God—as the aged pilgrims have told us, that for years they had

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never had a thought about their own salvation—as the aged Bengel said, ‘The same old terms.’ And it is only when in conscious experience we have been taken thus far, that we can study God for his own sake and for what He is. This is the furthest we can reach here.

The *standing* of every believer before God in Christ Jesus, known only by faith here, is the same, and is independent of his realising it or enjoying it.

The actual *state* of every Christian upon the earth is likewise the same. What an anomaly any Christian is in the world! A son of God walking through a God-hating world, with a God-hating devil its head, and having within him a God-hating nature; the fact being that every Christian, as to conflict down here, is in Egypt, in the Wilderness, and in Canaan.

The *experience* of every Christian is not the same, but varies in different people, and in the same person at different times, according as he knows his standing before God, knows his state and walks in the Spirit. Thus we find the reason of so much seeming contradiction in Scripture, and in the writings of God-taught men. I am sometimes confronted with a passage in a man's writings, and asked, ‘Do you believe that?’

‘Yes,’ I answer; ‘and do you believe that?’—a directly opposite statement (seemingly), and again I say—

‘Yes,’ because I find the same expressions in God's Word.

They all reconcile themselves in our own consciousness, if we are submissive enough to wait and learn God's mind. I wish that you, my Christian reader, may distinctly see the difference between what the Christian is in God's sight, and what he is in this world, and also why there is so much difference in different Christians. There is one path, and but one path, in which our God and Father would have us walk—that is the path of His own Son here in conscious sonship witnessing for Him as if we were in Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan, taking sides with Him against the world, against ourselves, and against the devil. This is Christian experience; but, alas! this is not always the experience of Christians. This may depend upon their not rightly dividing the word of truth, or their not seeing the truth in its many aspects. If we draw up a few seeming contradictions from God's word concerning the Christian in parallel columns, if we read down one of them we shall find the experience of some Christians; if again we read down the other we shall find the experience of another class of Christians—but Christian experience is the harmonious and scriptural blending of both. (I wonder what angels think as they see such sons of God here!) Did not Paul know this strange contradiction? I saw an infidel tract the other day meant to prove the Bible to be false, by drawing up in parallel columns about a dozen contradictions found in Scripture, such as, 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' and, 'if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,' &c.; and I thought, 'Are the

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infidels really so far back?" So I commend the following four dozen, instead of one, to their notice, and promise more when these are understood. The poor infidel never heard of a new creation and an old in the same man. He knows only the old, and patches it.

Well-known.
Behold we live.
Always rejoicing.
Making many rich.
Possessing all things.
Ye have put off the old man.
Ye have put on the new man.
Who can be against us?
Who shall lay anything to our charge?
Who is he that condemneth?
He that is born of God sinneth not.
We are not in the flesh.
Not under law.
He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life.
The Lord's freemen.
Being made free from sin.

Accepted in the Beloved.

We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

God who always causeth us to triumph.

We are already saved.

Let us therefore as many as be *perfect*.

Yet unknown.
Dying.
Yet sorrowful.
Yet poor.
Having nothing.
Put off all these.
Put on therefore.
World, devil, and flesh.
The Accuser accuses the brethren day and night.
We judge ourselves.
If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.
As long as we are in the flesh.
Keep my commandments.
We live if ye stand fast in the Lord.
Christ's slaves.
Blood cleanseth (not has cleansed) us from all sin.
We labour to be accepted (in service).
The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.
What great conflict I have for you.
We are working out our salvation.
We are waiting for salvation.
Not as though I were already *perfect*.

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Ye are *complete* in Him.

Seeing ye have *purified* your souls.

Ye are *unleavened*.

Father who hath made us *meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Always confident.

Through death He destroyed Him that had the power of death.

Everywhere and in all things—

To be full, and

To abound, and

Dead to sin.

Risen with Christ.

I am strong.

We have an anchor sure and steadfast.

They shall never perish.

Why as though living in the world.

I am dead.

We are sanctified, justified; Christ our sanctification.

Seated in heavenly places in Christ.

Bear ye one another's burdens.

Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Saved from sin.

Justified by faith.

Sanctified by blood and will of God.

Saints by call.

We pray that we may stand *complete* in all the will of God.

Let every one that hath this hope in Him *purify* himself.

Purge out the old *leaven*.

When He shall appear we shall be *like* Him.

With fear and trembling.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

To be hungry.

To suffer need (Phil. iv. 12).

Let not sin therefore reign.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.

When I am weak.

Make your calling and election sure.

Lest I should be a castaway,

The life which we now live in the flesh.

Nevertheless I live.

We pray that we may be sanctified wholly.

We are in the world.

Every man shall bear his own burden.

I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.

Chief of sinners.

Justified by works.

Sanctified by the word and Spirit.

Purified by progress.

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We (Christians) shall not come into judgment.

We (Christians) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

All these seeming contradictions are thoroughly explained when one sees the difference between our standing and our state. If I reckon my standing according to my state, I am in a low and God-dishonouring experience. If I bring the power and character of my standing to mould my state, then I shall have a happy and God-honouring experience.

The Lamb on the cross has purchased all.

The Lamb from the throne, when He returns in power shall claim all, and actually take all.

In Egypt it is the blood of the Lamb.

Romans and Galatians shew us the power that brought us out and keeps us in Egypt.

In Amalek's fight it is the blood of the Lamb who is the advocate on high, that is presented.

Hebrews look at the Christian as always in the Wilderness.

It is by the blood of the Lamb that the accuser of the brethren is overcome. Clad in God's armour we fight.

Ephesians is the book of our Canaan.

Soon faith will be fact. May our blessed Lord grant it. Not at death will this be true of the whole Church of God, but when He returns. Our experience will then be both what faith and fact are; our state shall then be as our standing; our standing shall be our state. We shall then be 'like Him,' soul and body. Do we not long for the time when the last of the bride shall be under the shelter of the blood-sprinkled lintel, and we shall be caught up

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together from a doomed *world*,—when the last conflict with Amalek shall have been fought, and his remembrance blotted out for ever; the *flesh* for ever left; ‘sins and iniquities remembered no more for ever;’ when the accuser of the brethren shall have been cast out of the heavenly place, and every opposing *spiritual wickedness* shall have been routed; when our Joshua, by His judgment-warfare (Rev. iv. to xxii.), shall have cleared the inheritance? Then, in the splendour of the Lamb on the throne, we shall be manifested as the sons of God, the body of Christ, the bride of the Lamb.

Fellow Christian, are you making your experience the standard for your walk? This is wrong.

Are you making your state your standard? This also is wrong.

But God would have us make our standing our standard. This honours Him. This gives conquering power.

Our attitude now is to wait calmly for the hour when all will be ours, in fact and also in experience, which is now ours in faith only; when our standing shall be our state. Even the Apostle Paul has not yet all; he is waiting with the Lord for what he was waiting for while here,—‘not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.’ (2 Cor. v.) This is why resurrection, not death, is our hope—why we wait for the Lord’s coming for us, and not for our going to Him. We do not wait for happiness merely, we wait for what will bring to a close this great paradox between *standing* and *state*, and also terminate that unseen

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state of disembodied souls with the Lord in Paradise. 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be LIKE HIM; for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' (1 John iii. 2.)

The world, the devil, and the flesh give you conflict. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost give you triumph.

PRAISE the Lord with hearts and voices,
Gathered in His holy name;
Every quicken'd soul rejoices,
Hearing of the Saviour's fame.

Praise the living God who gave us
Lost and ruin'd as we lay,
His beloved Son to save us,
Bearing all our sin away.

Praise the Lord for all His guiding,
Snares so thickly round us lie:
We in His own light abiding,
Are directed by His eye.

Praise Him for His long forbearance,
How our sin His heart must pain;
Righteous is His loving-kindness,
Cleansing us from every stain.

Praise Him, enemies assail us,
As we through the desert go;
But His sword can never fail us,
It shall silence every foe.

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Praise Him for the manna given,
Falling freshly every day ;
Jesus Christ our Lord from Heaven,
Is our food through all the way.

Praise Him for the water flowing,
Freely in its boundless tide ;
Christ the smitten Rock we're knowing,
Pierced for us His wounded side.

Praise Him through the desert marching,
Onward to the golden shore ;
For our Saviour we are watching,
And we'll praise Him evermore.





